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EAM S Jaishankar speaks to his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi. They exchanged views on latest developments related to the US-Iran ceasefire, bilateral relations as well as regional and int'l issues, according to Iranian embassy, P 6

Two Jewish men stabbed near a synagogue in north-west London **by a 45-yr-old man, with police declaring it a terror attack.** Attacker has been arrested, PAGE OPP

Sourav Kothari outclasses compatriot Pankaj Advani in a lopsided final to retain IBSF World Billiards Championship title in Ireland. Kothari beat 19-time champion Advani 1133-477 in the 3-hour match, P 14

In a display of diplomatic wit, **King Charles III** playfully roasts Trump during a White House state dinner; says **had it not been for British intervention in North America, Americans might currently be speaking French,** PAGE OPP

Exit polls differ on WB, TN, give Assam to BJP, Kerala to Cong

AINRC-BJP Likely To Retain Puducherry

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Exit polls on Wednesday agreed that the BJP-led alliance would win Assam comfortably, the UDF would unseat the LDF in Kerala and the AINRC-BJP combine would retain Puducherry but disagreed on the outcome in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

The most startling prediction was Axis My India's projection of Tamil Nadu being a tight race between the Vijay-led TVK (98-120 seats) and the DMK alliance (92-110) – in that order – with the AIADMK-led NDA reduced to an also-ran in the 234-member House. The other three exit polls being taken into account here all gave the DMK-led coalition a majority, though a reduced one from five years earlier.

On West Bengal, while Axis MY India did not release its findings on Wednesday and some other well-known pollsters too preferred to wait for another day, of the three polls here, the one by P Marq projected BJP to most likely win a majority in the 294-member assembly and Matrize gave the saffron party the edge though not a majority in a state it has never won in the past. The third poll, People's Pulse, in contrast, projected a decisive TMC victory that would give Mamata Banerjee a fourth consecutive term of office.

All four exit polls suggested that the NDA was likely to win a two-thirds majority in the 126-member Assam assembly, which would also mean BJP for the first time winning a majority on its own in the northeastern state.

The Congress-led alliance was projected to bag between 24 and 40 seats.

▶Left may not be in power, P 14

BLOCKBUSTER DEBUT BY VIJAY'S TVK IN TN?

State		Axis My India	People's Pulse	P Marq	Matrize
ASSAM (126)	BJP+	**88-100**	**83-91**	**82-94**	**85-95**
	Cong+	24-36	22-26	30-40	25-32
	Others	0-3	NA	1-5	6-12
KERALA (140)	UDF	**78-90**	**75-85**	**71-79**	**70-75**
	LDF	49-62	55-65	62-69	60-65
	BJP+	0-3	0-3	1-4	3-5
TAMIL NADU (234)	DMK+	92-110	**125-145**	**125-145**	**122-132**
	ADMK+	22-23	65-80	65-85	87-100
	TVK	**98-120**	18-24	16-26	10-12
W BENGAL (294)	TMC	Did not release findings on Wednesday	**177-187**	118-138	125-140
	BJP		95-110	**150-175**	**146-161**
	Others		1-5	2-6	6-10

B'day outing turns tragic; girl among 7 buried alive in city hosp wall crash

B'luru's 1st Major Rain-Related Tragedy In 20 Yrs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Seven people, including a girl who had gone shopping for her seventh birthday on May 3, were killed and nine injured after a wall of Bowring Hospital in Shivajinagar collapsed on them during thunderstorms here Wednesday evening. This is the first major rain-related tragedy in the tech capital in the past two decades.

The victims included two women from Kerala who were part of a team of 50 visiting Bengaluru. They had taken shelter along the eight-foot-high compound wall of the hospital to escape the sudden downpour.

The deceased are Fayaz Ahmed, 39, footwear vendor; Mohammed Abdul Haq, 52, cloth seller; Musfira, 6; KK Latha, 57, and Smita, 47, from Kerala; Mohd Salauddin, 36, vendor from UP; and Naseemullah, 19, from Assam, who was making car stickers.

According to police and Greater Bengaluru Authority officials, many of the deceased and the injured were street vendors, who used to sell wares alongside the hospital compound wall.

CM Siddaramaiah, who rushed to the site, promised thorough investigations and action against officials if negligence is established. He announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the next of kin of the victims. "The injured are out of danger. I have instructed doctors to provide treatment free of cost," he said.

The investigation will determine why the wall collapsed and if it was in a dilapidated condition. "If it was in a dilapidated condition, why did the engineers ignore its state? Construction is going on inside the hospital campus. Sand was dumped near the wall. Prima facie, the wall might have collapsed because of the pressure," he added.

Deputy CM DK Shivakumar attributed the incident to nature's fury and ruled out lapses on the part of GBA officials.

The compound wall of erstwhile Binny Mill near Cottonpet too collapsed. However, there were no casualties.

TOI

Officials said many deceased and injured were street vendors. The victims also included two women from Kerala who had taken shelter along the eight-foot-high compound wall to escape the sudden rain

2 electrocuted; man dead in roof collapse

Two men lost lives in separate incidents of electrocution. Syed Sufian, a 17-year-old resident of KG Halli, suffered a fatal shock in Shivajinagar after stepping on a live wire submerged in a puddle on the road. He was retrieving his bike from a parking lot when he stepped into a puddle with a live wire. Raghu, a 30-year-old cobbler on Bannerghatta Road, was electrocuted around 6.45pm near Jedi Mara Junction. **Late night,** Manjunath, 35, died after the roof and wall of his house collapsed on him on Ashwathkatte Road in Chamarajpet. TNN

RAIN CHAOS IN CITY

- IMD-B'luru says **hailstorms are triggered by intense surface heating,** unstable atmospheric conditions & are typically **confined to summer months of March-April**
- Water gushes in & **floods Bookworm bookstore on Church Street,** destroying nearly 5,000 prized books
- Relief from heat, but Wednesday's sudden **downpour again exposes the city's deep vulnerability to extreme weather swings**

FULL COVERAGE: P 2

BESCOM, GBA GET 25,500 DISTRESS CALLS AFTER RECORD RAIN

- Between 4pm and 8.30pm, **Bescom helpline received 25,000 distress calls.** Nearly 18,000 went unanswered due to long wait times, 6,869 were attended to, and 6,607 complaints were registered

50 Electric poles uprooted

200+ Poles damaged due to falling trees & branches

11.1cm Rain on Wednesday is Bengaluru's single-day rain record for April

70 Localities report water-logging

500+ Distress calls to GBA

170 Trees uprooted

40-50 kmph Wind speed

Worst-hit areas: Chickpet, Shantinagar, Rajajinagar, Pulakeshinagar, CV Raman Nagar and Sarvagnanagar

City's Catholic Club was blanketed in hailstones, creating a surreal, snow-like scene with videos of it going viral

- Weather dept has forecast intermittent thundershowers in the next 48 hours, raising concerns of further disruption in an already-battered city

Blow to Tata Sons' plan to stay unlisted

Dealing a blow to Tata Sons' bid to avoid going public, RBI rejected an argument that would have allowed the Tata conglomerate's holding company to surrender its financial licence and avoid a mandatory stock exchange listing. RBI clarified that equity received from group firms with access to capital markets counts as indirect access to public funds, explicitly dismissing suggestions for a narrower interpretation. P 11

Porn screened during HC virtual hearing

Proceedings before Delhi high court CJ on Wednesday were disrupted after a user logged in virtually & displayed pornographic content. HC immediately suspended the virtual proceedings. P 6

Owners must stay at homestay they run

State govt has issued new homestay rules after a US tourist's alleged rape in Kodagu. They mandate owners to stay on property, give guests police contact & landlines if mobile connection is poor. P 4

Husky found dead near Hyd, 5 rescued

Five siberian huskies were rescued near Hyderabad after being abandoned in extreme heat, while a sixth was found dead. Rescuers suspect a breeder dumped 35–40 huskies on April 20. P 5

Dabholkar murder convict gets bail

Bombay HC Wednesday granted bail to Sharad Kalaskar, convicted for rationalist Narendra Dabholkar's 2013 murder, citing doubtful evidence and unreliable eyewitness testimony. P 5

92.6% turnout in Ph 2 polls takes West Bengal total to record 92.9%

Kaushik Pradhan & Debashis Konar | TNN

Kolkata: Voter turnout in 142 constituencies that went to polls in the second phase of the assembly election on Wednesday was 92.6% till 11pm, taking the overall turnout across all 294 seats and two phases of polling to a whopping 92.9%.

The figure easily beat the 2021 turnout — a decent 81.5% — and was one of the highest turnouts for an assembly poll anywhere in India till date, EC officials said. Bengal's best turnout before this election came in 2011, when 84.3% of voters went to the booths to get the 34-year-old Left Front govt out of office.

The overall turnout for Bengal this election comes tantalisingly close to the nationwide record of 93.6% in Tripura's 2013 assembly poll. However, the Tripura turnout was based on an aggregate of EVM votes and postal ballots, while the West Bengal percentage is calculated only on EVM votes.

▶ FULL COVERAGE: PAGE 14

▶Since Independence, P 6

Modi: Proof of tide turning for BJP

Expressing confidence about BJP coming to office in Bengal for first time, PM Modi said the record turnout is the harbinger of change. He predicted that NDA would also retain Assam and Puducherry and spring a few surprises in Kerala and TN. He said the BJP-led alliance was building on its Bihar triumph some months ago. P 14

Cap off, popn norms eased for MBBS seats

New Delhi: In a move that is expected to benefit both govt and private colleges, National Medical Commission has removed key restrictions on the expansion of MBBS seats, opening the door for a substantial increase in undergraduate medical seats across the country.

In a gazette notification issued on April 27, NMC amended its 2023 regulations governing new medical colleges and expansion of existing courses.

The amendment deletes a clause that capped the total number of MBBS seats at 150 per college for those seeking expansion from 2024-25 academic year. The commission has also removed the requirement that states maintain a ratio of 100 MBBS seats per 10 lakh population. TNN

▶Norms revised, P 5

SC quashes criminal case against cop due to 35-year delay in trial

New Delhi: In a first, a criminal case has been quashed against a police officer on the grounds of delay in trial proceedings, which remained dormant for 35 years, **reports Amit Anand Choudhary**.

"We are informed that in all, five accused came to be chargesheeted, including the present petitioner. Out of five, two co-accused passed away and the other two co-accused have been acquitted on grounds that prosecution failed to produce any prosecution witnesses for purpose of recording oral evidence," a bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and Ujjal Bhuyan said.

"In the facts and circumstances of this case, more particularly having regard to the fact that almost 35 years have lapsed, we are inclined to quash proceedings only on these grounds alone," it said.

▶Bifurcation of state, P 5

Law adequate to deal with hate speech: SC

SC said there is no legal vacuum that could justify its intervention to deal with the problem of hate speeches, with the existing framework of criminal law adequately addressing the issue. It said that govt can take a call on amending the law to tackle the menace in view of "societal changes". P 5

Can't be party to annihilation of a religion: SC

New Delhi: SC Wednesday said if a person's fundamental right to freedom of religion is held to be superior to the identical right of a group or denomination, it could lead to dangerous consequences and the court was not going to be part of the process for annihilation of a religion.

Bindu Ammini, a lawyer and social activist who was manhandled for attempting to enter Sabarimala after 2018 SC verdict removed the ban on entry of women in 10-50 age group, asserted her fundamental right to enter a temple. Indira Jaising, appearing for Bindu & another woman Kanakadurga, said there was no theological bar on women entering any public temple. TNN

▶Can't debate, P 5

It's official. Mysuru in grip of heatwave

Mysuru: With the maximum temperature hovering between 37°C and 40°C in the past fortnight, Mysuru city — shorthand for pleasant weather, thanks to its large lakes and leafy roads — is now officially hit by heatwave, **reports Shrinivasa M**.

As per a Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre report, Mysuru is locally experiencing heatwave conditions. IMD guidelines say heatwave is declared when the temperature departure is over 4.5°C from the normal or the maximum temperature breaches 40°C in the plains.

▶Lack of rainfall, P 2

First in India: AI-powered Namma 112 goes multilingual

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Bengaluru: Bengaluru Police on Wednesday introduced an AI-powered multilingual feature in its Namma 112 emergency helpline (police control room), becoming the first police unit in the country to deploy such a system.

The new initiative removes language barriers by supporting over 10 Indian and foreign languages, including Bengali, Malayalam, Gujarati, Odia, Manipuri, Assamese, Kashmiri, Nepali, as well as French, Spanish, and Arabic. Most in the police force are already familiar with Kannada, English, Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu.

Developed in collaboration with Monday Ventures and Aeos, the system utilises multilingual Voice AI for Nationwide Key Interventions (VANKI) for communication in multiple languages.

HOW IT WORKS

- When a call is made to 112, a control room staff member answers it. If the **caller wishes to speak in another language, the system switches to AI mode**
- **AI will identify the language and get information** from the caller using preloaded questions
- During this time, the staffer will be monitoring the call. **It is closed only when a nearby Hoysala vehicle or cops reach the caller**

▶HM: More lingos soon, P 3

Brent price tops $119, highest since 2022

US crude rose 7.3% to $107.24 a barrel and Brent was up 7.3% at $119.3 after touching its highest point since 2022, with little sign of a resolution two months into the US-Israeli war against Iran, which has snarled energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz.

A White House official said on Wednesday that President Donald Trump had asked US oil firms about ways to mitigate the impact of a potentially months-long US blockade of Iranian ports. Meanwhile, in the first official estimate of the military price for the Iran conflict, a Pentagon official said the war has cost $25 billion so far. Page Opp

Bangalore Times

Give actors who do comedy the respect they deserve: Arshad

Parekh with a career of decades and often seen as shallow, non-serious and unintelligent takes in reality, are keen to be taken seriously. Here, the multi-faceted actor talks to us about why he is a director keen that comedy is the most difficult form of acting

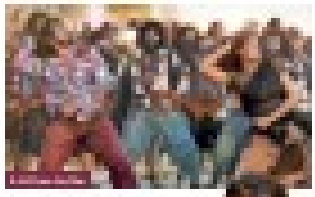
T

Buzzstop

'YASH'S TOXIC RELEASE POSTPONED; MAKERS SAY FILM WILL RELEASE ON A 'GLOBALLY ALIGNED DATE'

KD is a 1970s real-life story told on a grand scale, says director Prem

A



deorhi

Landscapes that breathe

Sacred Kumaon

Ranikhet - Binsar - Jageshwar

IT'S RAINING DESTRUCTION: In minutes, roads around major commercial hubs turned into gushing streams, with water levels rising up to 2 to 3 feet. Vehicles broke down, traffic slowed and many motorists and pedestrians were left stranded

HEAT TO HAVOC: IMD Forecast Intermittent Thundershowers With Windspeed Of 30-40kmph In Next 48 Hours

FAST & FURIOUS: 1hr of hailstorm, heavy winds unleash chaos on CBD

Pics: Syed Asif, TOI, Agencies

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Bengaluru: After weeks of relentless heat, Bengaluru was slammed by a burst of squally thundershowers for over an hour Wednesday. The central business district — the city's glitzy hub — bore its fury in full force. Much-needed relief quickly spiralled into chaos, again exposing the city's deep vulnerability to extreme weather swings.

Barely minutes after India Meteorological Department issued an orange alert for 'very heavy rainfall' at 5.15pm, intense downpour accompanied by hailstorms pounded CBD. The situation worsened as gusts clocking 50kmph uprooted trees and snapped hundreds of branches, bringing traffic to a standstill.

Choked by a thick carpet of fallen leaves, dust and debris, stormwater drains overflowed, inundating key stretches across CBD. Ashok Nagar and areas around Kanteerava Stadium were blanketed in thick layers of hail for over half an hour.

IMD said the city recorded 78mm of rainfall in central zones, with significant showers in southern and eastern parts. Officials attributed the squally conditions and hailstorm to a trough — or, wind discontinuity — extending from Rayalaseema to the Comorin region, passing over Karnataka at 0.9km above mean sea level.

Sources in Greater Bengaluru Authority said heavy rain lashed MG Road, Ashok Nagar, Richmond Town, Ulsoor, Indiranagar, Koramangala, Chickpet, Chamarajapet, VV Puram, Banashankari, parts of JP Nagar, BTM Layout and Bellandur, among other areas.

In minutes, roads around major commercial hubs turned into gushing streams, with water levels rising up to 2 to 3 feet. Overflowing drains aggravated flooding in low-lying areas. As the downpour continued, thousands of motorists, office-goers and shoppers were left stranded. Vehicles broke down. Beneath pedestrian underpasses, peak-hour traffic limped.

The abrupt transition from heatwave to heavy rain caught both residents and authorities offguard. CM Siddaramaiah, who visited Shivajinagar to assess the damage, admitted the rainfall intensity had taken everyone by surprise. GBA chief commissioner Maheshwara Rao said special teams comprising engineers will be deployed to areas vulnerable to flooding.

IMD has forecast intermittent thundershowers — with windspeed of 30-40kmph — in the next 48 hours, raising concerns of further disruption in an already-battered city.

25,000 distress calls as city goes dark

The helpline of Bescom — 1912 — was inundated with thousands of distress calls reporting outages, tree falls, uprooted poles, cable snapping and transformer blasts following the evening downpour.

The impact on electrical infrastructure was severe. An incoming power line of KPTCL sustained significant damage, leading to a sharp dip in Bengaluru's power consumption by nearly 300 MW — from 6,900 MW to 6,600 MW.

Sources in Bescom said from 4pm and 8.30pm, it got almost 25,000 calls. Of these, 6,607 were registered as complaints.

What causes hailstorms in March-April

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The lush green turf at Kanteerava Stadium, where football matches are usually played, turned snow-white for a few minutes Wednesday evening, a telling image—not AI-generated—of the intensity of the hailstorm.

While many took to posting online images of ice pellets they had collected or videos of hailstones falling, the question many asked was: Why is Bengaluru witnessing a hailstorm?

According to IMD-Bengaluru officials, hailstorms are triggered by intense surface heating and unstable atmospheric conditions and these are typically confined to the peak summer months of March-April and early days of May.

"During summer months, the surface area (land) heats up rapidly and traps heat. Along with moisture-laden humid air, this heat continues to linger near the surface. Gradually, this accumulation of warm and humid air begins to rise and forms into clouds — categorised as cumulonimbus clouds, which people call dark clouds," explained a senior official.

Green turf at Kanteerava Stadium turned snow-white for a few minutes Wednesday

As these towering clouds develop, the moisture within them freezes into ice pellets due to extremely cold temperatures at higher altitudes. "When they become too heavy and surpass the threshold, the result is hailstorms," he said, adding they are common in Karnataka during this period due to prevailing wind discontinuities or troughs extending across peninsular India.

"The infusion of moisture over the peninsular region from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal paves the way for these conditions. This climatic phase results in intense spells of rain, lightning, strong gusty winds and hailstorms," an independent weather observer explained.

Agrimeteorologists from GKVK noted that hailstorms are typically brief and localised — often lasting no more than half an hour, as seen in Bengaluru Wednesday..

Lack of rainfall contributed to rising temperature: Study

▶ Continued from page 1

In the ongoing season, Mysuru district is currently experiencing near-brutal above-normal temperatures due to climatological changes. Departures from the normal are between two and four degrees. These conditions indicate above-normal heating across the district. The normal maximum temperature for Mysuru in April is around 34°C – 35°C.

IMD forecast offers no immediate relief from the heat spell in south-interior Karnataka, with the maximum temperature set to rule well above the normal for the next five days. Thunderstorms with hail and gusty winds with speeds up to 40-50 kmph are likely to occur at one or two places in the coming days.

As per the KSNDMC report valid till May 4, all nine taluks in Mysuru district are categorised under low-heat risk areas.

According to KSNDMC officials, several parts of the district recorded 40 degrees Celsius on Tuesday. "Tourist spot Talakadu and temple town T Narasipura, among others, logged 40 degrees Celsius," said an officer.

According to an analysis, lack of rainfall has contributed to continuous rise in temperature. "Strong solar radiation (clear-sky conditions), absence of cloud cover, delay in pre-monsoon showers, dry wind patterns over interior Karnataka, and impact of large-scale climate variability are major causes for the high temperature," an assessment said.

According to Parashuramegowda, an environmentalist, the prevailing situation calls for introspection. "Loss of green cover, disappearance of waterbodies, and concrete structures have resulted in high temperatures. Our fear is what is in store for the next generation," he said, urging the govt to draw a roadmap to make efforts and restore ecological balance in the coming years.

Cool showers, chaotic streets: Two sides of sudden showers

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Rain was expected Wednesday, but no one expected the fury that it unleashed. The nearly 40-minute downpour threw life out of gear, especially for those in central and eastern parts of the city, who were desperately waiting for respite from the searing summer heat.

With localities flooded and roads inundated, thousands of people returning home from offices were stranded at Metro stations, outside workplaces and at bus stops, as rainwater rose above ankle level in some places.

Rahul Goyal, a trader on SJP Road, said: "We want to know what precautions govt has taken to prevent flooding. The most worrisome issue is that dug-up roads, potholes and open manholes pose a danger to both vehicles and pedestrians. Desilting of drains should be undertaken immediately and the muck should not be left on the roads. SJP Road is completely flooded, making it very difficult to travel."

Dakshinya P, a non-IT professional from Mahadevapura, said: "II was happy to see the rain but I never expected the city to face waterlogging so quickly. It barely lasted an hour and the path from my bus stop to home was already flooded. Shouldn't officials try to solve the problem instead of relying on patchwork solutions?" Many persons found their two-wheelers and cars partially submerged in rainwater in areas such as Sultanpet and Kamaraj Road.

Pedestrians too struggled to navigate, unsure of uncovered manholes and open slabs on pavements.

On the other side, those who stayed indoors and remained unaffected by rain damage expressed relief as a cool breeze swept across the city, with cloudy skies replacing the harsh sun. Vihan Raj from Whitefield said: "Rain was much needed after the heat we endured this month. I travelled to Koramangala for my internship and the heat was always an issue while commuting. But now the city will cool down and I can travel without getting tired."

Misha Baniya, a student from SG Palya, said: "Rain brings freshness to life. The earthy aroma and cool winds calm me down."

Vendors' lives built and shattered on pavement of Bowring Hospital

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Bengaluru: It was a familiar slice of evening chaos until sudden rain tore through its monotonous rhythm. Vendors shouting at high pitch to attract shoppers, bikers impatiently honking to race ahead, office-goers rushing towards bus station and people walking towards Bowring Hospital. When the skies opened up in the evening, everything turned topsy turvy, edged with tragedy. Seven persons were crushed to death after the eight-foot-high compound wall crashed — all of a sudden and crushing their dreams in nanoseconds.

"I did not think a tragedy of this kind — limited to movies — would ever happen in real life. I was shocked," said Suhail, a vendor who rushed to rescue those trapped under the debris.

Suhail said, "We have been here for 20 peaceful years, selling clothes, purses and slippers. There was no indication the wall would give in. There were women, children and old people — they didn't have a clue what to do next. I, too, was scared. Then I brought three people into the hospital."

Amid rescue efforts, his worry stayed focused on his injured brother. "He has two kids — aged two and four," he said. His brother is recovering in hospital.

Outside the hospital, grief and anxiety hung low and heavy as families gathered, waiting for updates.

Among the deceased was Mohammed Abdul Haq, a 53-year-old vendor and sole breadwinner. His father-in-law Ghouse Mohammed said, "Haq was selling clothes in Majestic for a long time. He moved here last year as it was tough to reap profits there. When it started raining, he covered his tiny shop with tarpaulin. Just then, the compound wall came crashing down. He had three children, including a daughter who is soon to be married."

Fayaz Ahammed, another long-time vendor, also lost his life. A resident of Pillana Garden, he has two kids and was the sole breadwinner of the family. His relative Younis Akram said, "The wall was old and weak. We don't know whether it was ever repaired."

As the tragedy unfolded, the vendor community came together. "Around 20 of us tried to clear the debris. The public and the police also joined in. A police inspector himself started clearing the debris," said Akram Pasha, another vendor.

Glee turns grief for b'day girl's family

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Musfira Begum, a bubbly girl shopping for her seventh birthday over the weekend, never imagined a happy outing would end in tragedy.

Accompanied by mother Mubeen Taj and aunt Tabreen Taj, Musfira wandered through bustling streets, choosing new clothes for the May 3 celebration she was eagerly planning.

When the wall near Bowring Hospital, Shivajinagar, collapsed following heavy rain, the child was trapped under the debris. She did not survive.

She was the only daughter of Mubeen and Chand Pasha, a real estate worker. The family lives in Venkateshpura near Kadugondanahalli.

Hasnail, a family member, said both aunts who were with Musfira suffered injuries. "They are being treated in the hospital. But I do not have an update on their condition yet," he added.

IT'S PELTING DOWN

TRAGIC TWIST IN STORY

5K BOOKS WASHED AWAY

Bookworm, the iconic bookshop on Church Street, saw nearly 5,000 books destroyed after rainwater gushed into the shop within minutes.

Proprietor Krishna Gowda said, "The hailstones clogged the drainage outlets, and almost instantly, water started pouring in from all sides," he said. By 5.30pm, shelves that once held stories, ideas and memories were soaked, with thousands of books — like The Penguin Book Of Indian Poets, Cubbon Park by Roopa Pai and Percy Jackson & the Olympians — beyond repair. The titles span history, philosophy, biographies and more. While the financial hit is estimated at Rs 14 lakh, he said the real loss is immeasurable. "Books carry knowledge, emotion and years of effort. That's what hurts the most."

Metro stations flooded, tree falls at KSR station

Public transport took a hit as flooding choked key transit points across Bengaluru. In the south, waterlogging around Jayadeva Hospital Metro station left roads toward Silk Board partly non-motorable, forcing traffic into a single lane.

Silk Board Metro station premises were also inundated, worsening congestion, especially with the double-decker flyover shut. At KSR railway station, a fallen tree near the entry damaged parked vehicles.

Internet outages in offices, homes

In several areas, uprooted trees brought down overhead cables, snapping connectivity at the peak of workday.

"Today, Bengaluru received its official first rain, and it's absolutely wild! Leaves are flying, trees are splitting, internet cables are destroyed, and there is silent thunder," an X user from Gandhinagar posted.

In the CBD, those working from home and offices struggled to stay online, with many turning to mobile hotspots.

Rainwater enters corridors of power

Not just the city roads, the corridors of Vidhana Soudha were also waterlogged after the heavy rains. Rainwater gushed into offices on the second and third floors of Vidhana Soudha—which include offices of most ministers, their secretaries, and even the offices of opposition leaders and legislative party offices.

170 trees, 408 branches fall

A total of 170 trees and 408 branches were reported fallen across the city as of 8.30pm Wednesday. The central zone reported the highest damage, with 67 trees and 131 branches down, followed by west zone with 55 trees and 121 branches. The lowest impact was in east zone, with just one tree and four branches.

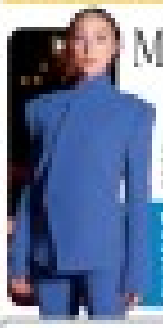
Civic authorities received over 500 calls, with some residents also lodging complaints via WhatsApp. Officials said heavy cloud movement was first observed in the east before it shifted towards central, south and west zones. In the evening, a tree fell on a woman residing in Kaval Byrasandra, injuring her head. Officials said she was taken to a nearby hospital.

Cutout of late actor crashes on Magadi Road

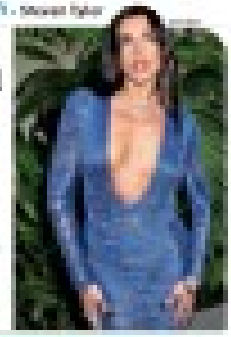
Following a tree fall, a giant cutout of late actor Vishnuvardhan fell near Prasanna theatre on Magadi Road around 5.40pm, briefly disrupting traffic movement, traffic police said. "All the obstacles at the spot were cleared by 6.20pm and traffic flow returned to normal," an officer said.

Blue is the closest colour to truth. - Steven Tyler

How to: Protect your eyes from harsh sunlight

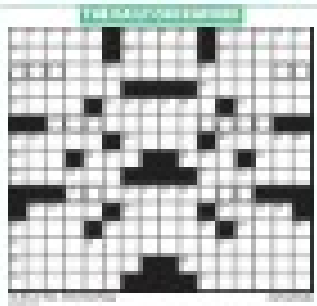


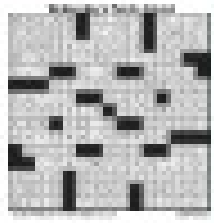
Move over pastels, cobalt blue is in

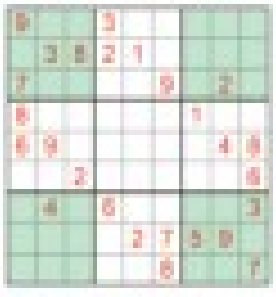


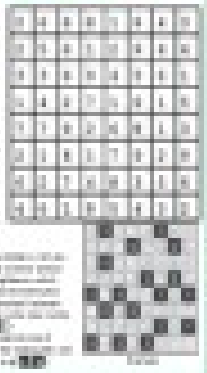
Are we forgetting how to find our way?

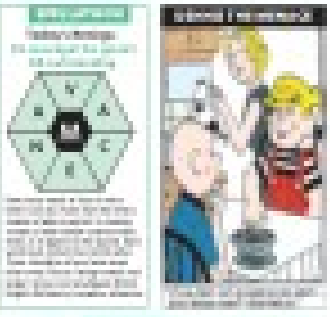
POV

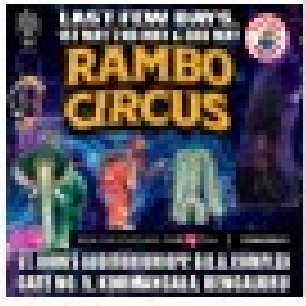


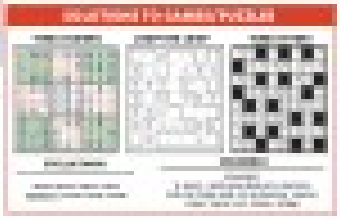












Gun in Bescom office toilet sparks alert, probe

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Bengaluru: A routine day at the Bescom office in Rajarajeshwarinagar turned tense when an electrical contractor discovered a loaded revolver inside the men's toilet, triggering panic.

Officials quickly alerted police, who seized the weapon. Minutes later, a man arrived claiming ownership and produced a digital copy of its licence, saying he accidentally left the revolver behind. However, police proceeded with an inquiry and, based on legal opinion, registered a case against him. The weapon can now be reclaimed only through court.

Ramanjinappa told Bescom officials he was suffering from diarrhoea but came for admission of his daughter to a college located opposite the office. He approached Bescom staff, saying he wanted to use the toilet. He reportedly kept his revolver in the window and forgot to take it back while leaving the premises

According to the complaint filed by Manjula, office manager and assistant accountant, W-7 sub-division, Bescom, Rajarajeshwarinagar, the revolver was noticed by an electrical contractor, Annappa, when he went to use the toilet on the first floor on April 9.

Unsure whether the weapon, lying unattended, was real or a potential threat, Annappa immediately alerted Bescom staff. Manjula then called emergency helpline 112 and informed police.

Hoysala police staff arrived at the spot, examined the weapon, and confirmed it to be a genuine .32 revolver loaded with five bullets. The Rajarajeshwarinagar police were alerted, the firearm was secured, and an initial inquiry was launched.

Meanwhile, a person identified as Ramanjinappa arrived at the Bescom office claiming that he forgot the revolver in the toilet and was now unable to find it. He showed on his mobile phone a digital copy of its licence.

Police registered a non-cognisable report (NCR) based on Manjula's complaint and refused to hand over the revolver to Ramanjinappa. Following their inquiry, police sought legal consultation. Based on legal advice, an FIR was registered under Section 30 of Arms Act on April 23.

According to Bescom officials, Ramanjinappa told them he was ill on that day and suffering from diarrhoea, but came for admission of his daughter to a college located opposite the Bescom office. He approached the Bescom staff, asked where the toilet was, and went to the first floor. He kept his revolver on the window's wooden frame and forgot to take it while leaving the premises.

A police officer said that legal advisers suggested registering a case and allowing the licence holder, Ramanjinappa, to collect the weapon with court permission.

When **TOI** tried to contact Ramanjinappa, his phone was switched off.

Stalking: HC bins suspect's plea

Times News Network

Bengaluru: The act of following women, monitoring them and recording their images without consent falls squarely within the mischief sought to be curbed by Section 78(1) of BNS, ie, stalking, observed the high court while dismissing a petition filed by a Bengaluru resident. The order copy was released Wednesday.

A criminal case was registered last year against BK Diganth, 28, for taking photographs of women passengers onboard a Namma Metro train and posting them on his social media account, Metro Chicks. Diganth approached the court for quashing of proceedings against him, citing that the allegations against him were vague.

However, Justice M Nagaprasanna rejected his plea. The complaint, when read alongside the chargesheet, paints a disquieting picture: Women commuting in the anonymity of public transport were subjected to covert surveillance; their images and videos captured without consent, focusing on various parts of their bodies and thereafter disseminated on a public digital platform for voyeuristic consumption, the court said. The investigation, as reflected in the chargesheet, reveals the petitioner's mobile device contains incriminating material of a similar nature, reinforcing the allegations, the judge noted.

The argument that the allegations are vague does not merit acceptance. The materials collected during probe disclose sufficient prima facie grounds to proceed, the court said. To interdict the proceedings at this juncture would not merely truncate the course of justice, but may also embolden similar transgressions, thereby imperilling the safety and dignity of women in public places. This court cannot remain oblivious to the larger societal implications, the judge said.

New stretch of Silk Board flyover shut after trial run

Cop Says Safety Issues Noticed; DCM Likely To Take Ride

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Within a week of opening the new carriageway of the double-decker flyover between Silk Board and Ragigudda Metro station, city traffic police Wednesday closed the road to motorists. Police said the 3.5-km stretch was opened only for a trial run, and a decision on regular operations now rests with Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL).

A senior police officer said several road safety issues were noticed during the trial run, and BMRCL has been asked to rectify them. Sources said the flyover will be opened for regular traffic from May 1. Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar is likely to inspect and take a ride on the new stretch, following which the corridor will be opened on a regular basis.

"Several road-related issues were identified on the elevated corridor, including inadequate signage. There is a need to install a signboard indicating the down ramp towards BTM Layout at least 100 metres in advance to assist motorists coming from HSR Layout side. Instructions have also been issued to install rumble strips as a safety measure, put up speed limit signage and enforce strict lane discipline on the flyover," the senior police officer pointed out.

TOI

A LITTLE MORE WAIT: Sources say the flyover will be opened for regular traffic from May 1

> Several road-related issues were identified on the elevated corridor, including inadequate signage... Instructions have also been issued to install rumble strips as a safety measure
> **- A senior police officer**

Opening of the flyover had brought relief to thousands of motorists travelling from southern parts of Bengaluru to Outer Ring Road stretch between K R Pura and Silk Board. BMRCL invested Rs 530 crore in the project. The stretch from Ragigudda to Silk Board was opened in July 2024, and the reverse stretch was opened on a trial basis last Wednesday.

Many motorists were clueless as to why the road stretch was closed within a few days of opening. Badrinath, a motorist, said, "Two days ago I took the flyover but on Wednesday I could not use it. Like me, other motorists were also clueless about the closure. If there are any issues, they should fix the problems and, without waiting for a VIP inauguration, allow regular traffic."

ELECTRIC CARS SET TO GET COSTLIER FROM TOMORROW

Bengaluru: Buying an electric car in Karnataka is set to become more expensive from May 1, with transport department directing regional transport offices (RTOs) to begin collecting registration fees on all variants of electric cars under revised rates. The move follows state govt's decision to withdraw 100% road tax exemption currently available for battery-operated cars, marking a significant policy shift in its electric mobility push.

Under Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Act, 2026, electric cars priced up to Rs 10 lakh will attract 5% tax, while those in Rs10 lakh-Rs 25 lakh bracket will be taxed at 8%. Vehicles priced above Rs 25 lakh will continue to attract 10% tax, with no change in that category. For instance, a car costing Rs 20 lakh will now draw Rs 1.6 lakh in tax.

The department expects to generate around Rs 250 crore in revenue through the new tax structure and related measures.

Electric vehicle manufacturers have opposed the move, warning it could slow down adoption at a time when the country is pushing for cleaner mobility solutions. Opposition parties have also criticised state govt for withdrawing lifetime tax exemptions for electric cars. TNN

Result delay: Students go on rampage

Angry over "anti-student" policies, hundreds of students stormed Kuvempu University campus in Shankaraghatta, near Shivamogga, smashed office furniture, flowerpots and smeared black ink on the nameplates of the vice-chancellor and registrar (evaluation) Wednesday.

The protest led by National Students' Union of India turned the campus city into a battlefield in a 20-minute free-for-all.

The students were protesting a five-month delay in announcing results of first, third and fifth semester exams, non-issuance of marks cards and degree certificates for the past three years.

Vice-chancellor Sharath Ananthamurthy condemned the incident as an act of vandalism, alleging the violence was orchestrated by former officials of Jnanasahyadri campus.

The protesters urged govt to immediately recall the vice-chancellor and registrar. While the university administration has vowed to file FIRs against those responsible for destroying public property, student leaders have warned of more intense agitations if their grievances are not resolved immediately. TNN

More lingos soon: HM

▸ Continued from page 1

Launching the project, home minister G Parameshwara said more languages will be introduced soon.

"Ours is an internationally renowned city and people from across the globe visit us. Language was an issue for those seeking help from police, particularly the control room. Now, we are the first police force in the country to interact in more than 10 languages," he said.

Police commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh said officers in Bengaluru can speak and understand Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Hindi. "The challenge is when people call us during an emergency and speak a language, Indian or foreign, that we are not familiar with. So we began collecting data on the languages people generally speak in while calling the helpline."

The data collection started in Jan this year, said joint commissioner of police (admin) Kuldeep Kumar Jain. "The police control room receives around 8,000 phone calls daily, of which around 2,000 require action. Of these 2,000 calls, 100-200 people speak in other languages. Malayalam was the most requested, followed by other regional languages, while Spanish, French, Nepali and Arabic were the most-sought after foreign languages," he said.

Preloaded posers

The AI mode will ask such questions: What is your name? What is the problem you are facing? Have you met with an accident, or were you injured? Who else is facing the problem? Please share your current location or tell us some landmark so that we can identify the place. Share your contact numbers and other details. TNN

2 die as car plunges into canal

A 30-year-old woman and her one-and-a-half-year-old child from Devanahalli in Bengaluru died after a car plunged into Hemavathi canal in Hassan's Channarayapatna taluk Wednesday.

Priyanka and her son Vaibhav are the victims. Four others sustained serious injuries, police said.

The family from Devanahalli was travelling back in a car after visiting Dharmasthala. On National Highway-75 near Mallanaghatta village in Channarayapatna taluk, the driver lost control of the vehicle and it plunged into Hemavathi canal. TNN

No camera fee at Hampi

In a move to boost tourism and encourage photography, the Union ministry of culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have scrapped camera fees at the Unesco World Heritage Site of Hampi.

The move, which came into effect from April 25, applies to all monuments and heritage sites in and around Hampi, allowing visitors to take photographs using cameras or mobile phones without any additional charge. Earlier, tourists had to pay Rs 50 per camera at select locations, including the iconic Vijaya Vittala Temple complex. However, use of tripods as well as drones will continue to need prior permission, while separate approvals remain mandatory for film shoots.

A senior tourism official said the move follows Union tourism minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat's recent visit, during which he directed officials to remove camera fees, noting that such charges hinder tourism at heritage destinations.

K Ramakrishna Reddy, superintending archaeologist, ASI Hampi Circle, said, "The removal of camera fees is expected to enhance visitor experience and encourage wider promotion of the site, while safeguards will remain in place to protect the monuments." TNN

15% NRI quota proposed for all govt medical colleges in state

Times News Network

Bengaluru: The directorate of medical education has proposed to the govt to introduce a 15% non-resident Indian (NRI) quota in all state-run medical colleges.

Last year, the NRI quota was introduced for the increased seats – for the seats added after the first round of counselling. As many as 67 seats were available under the NRI quota as it was applicable only to 450 additional seats. This year, the proposal is for all the seats. There are around 4,200 seats in medical colleges in the state, of which 15% are under the all-India quota.

While the directorate has recommended Rs 25 lakh for MBBS seats, it has suggested a differential fee structure for postgraduate programmes. "We have recommended a uniform fee structure for MBBS seats across colleges. However, for PG, we suggest different rates for clinical and paraclinical programmes," said Sujatha Rathod, the director of medical education.

The medical education department said no decision has been taken on it yet. Sources said the finance dept has raised queries about the cost-benefit of the proposal.

The department has been proposing NRI quota to increase the revenue for medical institutions, which are otherwise largely dependent on grants from govt, along with fees collected from the students.

However, the department pointed out that these grants are grossly insufficient to meet rising expenses. In this context, the introduction of an NRI quota is being considered as a viable solution.

1.7L students register for II PU exam-2

Bengaluru: Over 1.7 lakh students have registered for the II PU examination-2, scheduled to be held from Thursday.

According to official data, 92,554 boys and 79,597 girls have enrolled for the second exam. A large portion of these candidates — 82,746 students — are those who could not clear their exam in the first attempt.

The figures also show a considerable number of students aiming to boost their performance. As many as 49,512 students who already passed their exam have applied for improvement, as II PU scores are used for calculating CET ranks.

Additionally, 39,099 repeater students have registered to reappear for the exam. As many as 794 private candidates will also be taking the exam. TNN

3 police officers suspended over student suicide

Two days after a college student died in Dharwad by suicide over allegations of drug consumption and police harassment, three police personnel were suspended Thursday.

The disciplinary action sheds light on allegations that money was being extorted from those detained during anti-drug drives.

Police said 20-year-old Aditya Myageri, a resident of Girinagar in Dharwad and from Bagalkot district, was among ten students detained by Dharwad's Vidyagiri police Saturday on charges of consuming ganja. But medical reports established Aditya, a BSc student, hadn't consumed any narcotic substance. Despite this, police allegedly demanded money to let him off the case.

Following the alleged harassment and demands for hush money, Aditya died by suicide Monday. TNN

HC OKs support to unmarried woman from mom & sister, quashes relief for bro

Times News Network

Bengaluru: The high court has upheld a family court's order that an unmarried woman is entitled to receive Rs 20,000 per month as maintenance as well as expenses for her marriage from her mother and elder sister.

However, the judge quashed the family court's order for similar maintenance to her brother, saying that as he had attained majority, he was not entitled to any such relief.

The dispute involves the family of T Madaiah, who died while serving as an employee of Mysuru Urban Development Authority (Muda). His elder daughter, Darshini (34), was given a job in MUDA after his death on June 20, 2013. His wife, Mangalagowramma, worked as a headmistress at a govt higher primary school till her retirement.

As a Muda employee died while in service, his elder daughter was given a job in the authority. But her younger siblings moved family court complaining of neglect

In 2019, Madaiah's second daughter, M Dhanushree (31), and son, Dhanush (29), filed a petition under Section 125 CrPC in the Mysuru family court, alleging that their mother and elder sister neglected to maintain them despite having sufficient income and means.

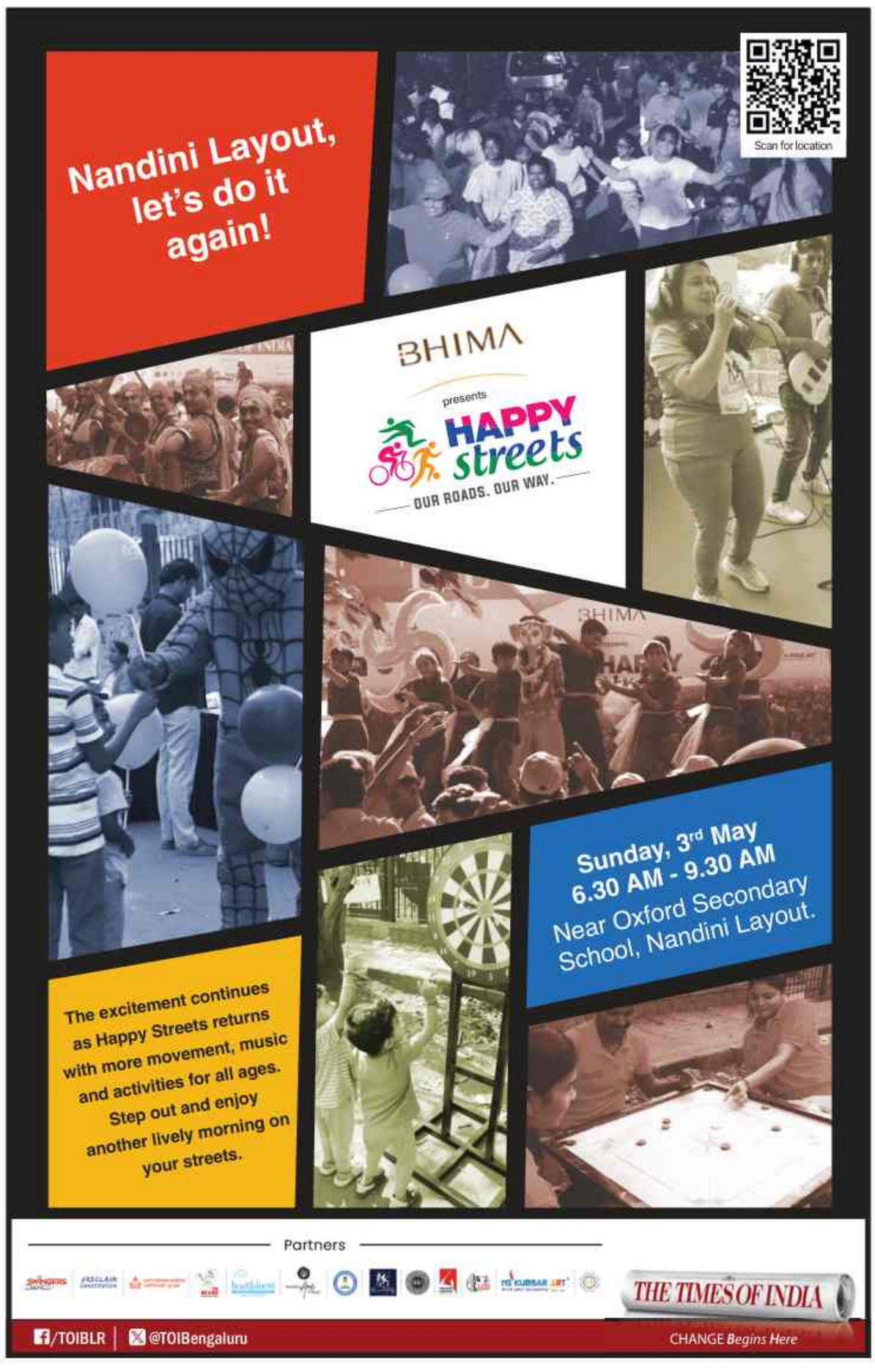
The siblings argued that their elder sister, Darshini, gave an undertaking at the time of getting a compassionate job in place of their father that she would take the responsibility of the family. They claimed that she had failed to keep that promise. According to them, she had got married and moved to Tumakuru, thus neglecting them.

On Sept 27, 2021, the family court held that Dhanushree was entitled to monthly maintenance of Rs 20,000 until her marriage and Rs 10 lakh towards her marriage expenses from her mother and monthly maintenance of Rs 7,000 per month until her marriage and Rs 2 lakh towards her marriage expenses from her elder sister.

The family court held that Dhanush was entitled to Rs 5 lakh from his mother and Rs 2 lakh from his sister. Another Rs 50,000 was to be jointly paid towards their educational expenses. Mangalagowramma and Darshini challenged the court's order, arguing that both Dhanush and Dhanushree had attained majority and hence were not entitled to any maintenance.

In his order issued on April 24, Justice Manmadha Rao said Dhanush had completed his education and also attained majority, hence he was not entitled to maintenance.

As regards Dhanushree, the judge said that she was unmarried and, therefore, entitled to maintenance till her marriage and also the marriage expenses. Justice Rao held that the maintenance awarded by the family court to Dhanushree was just and reasonable.



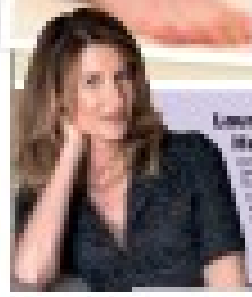
UP TO DATE

WHAT'S #TRENDING AND WHY

Chanel debuts new line of barely there shoes

David Dhawan hits to be re-released in theatres to celebrate his cinema legacy

US to issue 'America 250' passports that will now feature Donald Trump's face



Laura Dern joins The White Lotus after Helena Bonham Carter's exit

There will always be a place for me in the film industry: Arshad Warsi

ARSHAD WARSI

'The kind of drama I liked is that being made on OTT, now'

It's not just oil that's getting costlier as the blockades continue

Shell shock: Iran War makes pistachio pricier

The 2024 conflict in the Irish Afrianus, a key shipping lane between Iran and Oman, has disrupted global trade, driving pistachio prices to an 8-year high

APRIL 17

Iran war pushes pistachio prices to 8-year high as supply crunch deepens

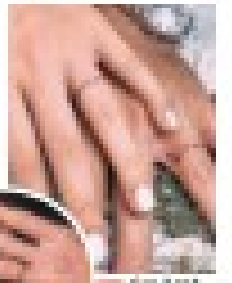
With two of its major producers, Iran and US, at war, the world of pistachio is going nuts

The inevitable price hike

A decades old trade here as well: Iran the US displaced Iran as the world's leading pistachio producer and exporter

The strained supply before the war

Young couples are putting a ring on it with tattoos



Not Z and millennials are first intended for traditional rules and more fun and wrinkled actually feels meaningful to them

New norms: Homestay owners must stay on property, ensure supervision

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Bengaluru: The state govt has intensified its crackdown on illegal homestays and tightened monitoring of foreign tourists staying in private accommodations, following the alleged rape of a US tourist in Kodagu district, in which two people including a cook and owner were arrested.

Acting on directives from Karnataka's director general and inspector general of police and additional director general of police (law and order), authorities conducted a special operation across districts with a high concentration of homestays, including Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada.

The drive led to the identification of over 100 illegal homestays so far, even as the operation continues. An official report will soon be submitted to the police and tourism departments, recommending action against operators found violating prescribed guidelines. Sources say licences could be cancelled.

Under revised norms, homestay operators must upload details of all foreign guests on the police department's system, display registration certificates and licences at reception, and report any illegal activity. Staff must undergo police verification, and guests must be provided contact details of key authorities, including police, health services and local administration.

To ensure supervision, the govt has made it mandatory for owners to reside on the premises. Officials said these steps aim to improve accountability, ensure compliance and enhance safety standards, particularly for foreign tourists staying in remote locations.

Officials said monitoring foreign tourists in remote estate properties had so far relied largely on the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) system and submission of Form C (which contains details of foreign guests).

The tourism department is also considering approaching the Centre to regulate online booking platforms that list both registered and unregistered properties. "We will approach the Centre with the proposal that only registered units should be allowed on these platforms," an official said.

However, officials acknowledged enforcement challenges, noting that several unregistered homestays depend on such platforms for a livelihood. "The state's list of registered homestays goes through a fair amount of scrutiny and is guided by Karnataka Tourism Trade (Facilitation and Regulation) Act, 2015, which mandates registration of homestays," said HM Srinivas, joint commissioner, tourism.

Additional measures include mandatory training for owners and staff by district tourism development committees. The women and child development department will also conduct sessions on gender sensitisation, POSH Act and Pocso Act.

Homestays must also install QR codes at reception for guests to download the Karnataka State Police SOS app. In areas with poor mobile connectivity, alternative communication facilities such as landlines must be provided. CCTV cameras at reception areas are now mandatory, with footage to be stored for at least 30 days.

> Over the past two years, notices were sent to 127 homestays that did not have proper documentation. Owners said it was due to online portal issues, so we began issuing manual permissions. Some 120 applications are in the process of securing NOCs from police and forest departments. With recent SOPs, we have begun surveying lapses
> **Lohith MR** | ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR TOURISM, CHIKKAMAGALURU

JD(S) at 25: From kingmaker to standing at crossroads

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File picture

ALL IN THE FAMILY: With HD Deve Gowda getting on in age, JD(S) is being managed by HD Kumaraswamy and his son Nikhil

Bengaluru: Only a few weeks away from its silver jubilee, JD(S) finds itself at a crossroads, facing questions over its identity, shrinking social base and organisational future amid shifting political equations.

Formed in 1999 after a split from Janata Dal, the party was led by former PM HD Deve Gowda, who built it as a secular, agrarian-focused alternative rooted in backward-class politics. Over the years, it established a stronghold in the Old Mysuru region, drawing support from Vokkaliga, sections of minorities and rural communities.

But its electoral journey has been patchy. From 115 seats and over 33% vote share in 1994 as part of undivided Janata Dal, it dropped to 10 seats in 1999 before recovering to 58 in 2004, when it emerged as kingmaker and formed the govt, first with Congress and later with BJP.

Its strength then declined, with 28 seats in 2008, 40 in 2013 and 37 in 2018, when it formed a govt with Congress support for a year. In 2023, it recorded its weakest performances, winning 19 seats with around 13% vote share.

With Gowda ageing, his son and Union minister HD Kumaraswamy, and grandson Nikhil Kumaraswamy, have taken charge of the party. But internal dissent and speculation over closer alignment with BJP have complicated the transition. Observers point to the possibility of JD(S) being repositioned alongside BJP, especially as the saffron party looks for a strong state-level face after BS Yediyurappa's era.

Analysts attribute the decline to structural issues and strategic shifts. Prof Harish Ramaswamy said the party's early promise as a "third alternative" weakened over time. "Ignoring grassroots workers who were outside the Deve Gowda family or Vokkaliga fold diluted its image as a common man's party," he said, noting that perceptions of dynastic control and limited internal democracy eroded its broader appeal.

Prof Ravindra Reshme said: "The very edifice of JD(S) was built around Deve Gowda's personality when he was the only national leader from Karnataka."

Ideological inconsistency

JD(S) first allied with Congress in 2004 and 2018, and BJP in 2006 and during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Analysts say these shifts have raised concerns about ideological consistency. The recent alignment with BJP has posed a fresh challenge, especially in retaining minority support, which historically backed the party.

"JD(S) had a distinct identity as a soft secular party, but the alliance with BJP has changed that perception significantly," said Ramaswamy. Electoral trends show minority voters, especially in the Old Mysuru belt, have increasingly shifted towards Congress. This has narrowed the party's social coalition.

Reshme said: "JD(S) is increasingly being seen as a party limited to a specific caste base. With minority voters drifting away, its electoral arithmetic is constrained."

Adding to its challenges is the erosion of influence in Hassan, long considered the party's bastion. The district is closely associated with the Deve Gowda family, but the party has seen a dent in its image following criminal cases involving Gowda's grandsons, Prajwal and Suraj. Recent developments show its hold is weakening.

Bamul gets ₹136cr ghee order from Tirupati

Bengaluru: Nandini, Karnataka's flagship dairy brand, has secured a Rs 136-crore contract to supply ghee to the Tirumala Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh, with about 2 lakh kgs to be dispatched every month over the next six months. Flagging off supply vehicles Wednesday, DK Suresh, president, Bengaluru Milk Union Ltd (Bamul) and former Congress MP, said the deal is a continuation of a long-standing association with the Nandini brand, although Bamul entered a separate agreement with Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams for this order.

To ensure quality standards and logistic safeguards, Suresh said: "The containers can be opened only after entering a password."

On milk prices, he ruled out an immediate hike despite increases by private players.

"We will study market rates," Suresh said. "There are certain shortcomings on our side, which we will address with govt approval. The cost of packaging materials such as plastic crates and bags has increased. Additionally, chemicals needed to purify milk are being imported. We will discuss this with KMF and decide the way forward."

Outlining expansion plans, Suresh said the focus will shift towards value-added products. "We (Bamul) are currently procuring around one crore litres of milk and are planning to introduce more value-added dairy products in the future," he said. "Last year, the state produced around 1.5 crore litres of milk daily. We are currently procuring about 17.5 lakh litres during summer. Our target is to reach 20 to 21 lakh litres per day." TNN

Kulkarni disqualified, says speaker Khader

Rubbishing BJP's allegations of a delay, speaker UT Khader said Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni has been disqualified from the assembly following his conviction in the murder of a BJP zilla panchayat member in Dharwad. Khader said the speaker has no authority to directly disqualify a legislator. "Disqualification powers apply only to matters within the House. When a member is convicted, the MLA post is automatically cancelled," he said. He said if a court grants a stay, the membership can be restored. Khader said his role was limited to informing the assembly and the secretary will examine the matter.

If decision is taken, we'll welcome Kharge as CM: Parameshwara

Home minister G Parameshwara said he and Karnataka Congress "would welcome" AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge as CM if such a decision is taken, while insisting there was no clarity on a change of CM. "We will be very happy, because he is a senior politician with a lot of experience," Parameshwara said. However, he said any decision on the issue rests soley with the party high command. "May be a decision will be taken after the May 4 elections results as the high command is aware of everything happening in the state." On remarks by MLA and former minister KN Rajanna that a Dalit should replace Siddaramaiah if there is a change, Parameshwara said: "Let's not speak about it." On the proposed Ahinda convention in Hubballi, he said the initiative aims to address issues of marginalised communities. "It is important that these communities come into the mainstream," he said.

Greater B'luru Authority spent Rs 1 lakh per pothole: BJP

Opposition leader in the legislative council, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy of BJP Wednesday alleged Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) was billing up to nearly Rs 1 lakh per pothole, calling it a "daylight robbery". Narayanaswamy claimed pothole-filling work, which he said was "not worth even Rs 5,000", was shown as costing tens of thousands of rupees in official records. He alleged that in Rajajinagar, 232 of 250 identified potholes were filled at an average cost of Rs 60,234 each. "Similarly, records show GBA filled 366 potholes of 374, with billing of Rs 1.8 crore in another segment," he said, pointing out varying rates. He also questioned the govt's decision to float waste management tenders for 7 years although it has only about 2 years left in its tenure.

Centre hasn't paid its share: CM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah Wednesday urged the Union govt to release pending funds under the Jal Jeevan Mission, alleging the Centre has not been paying its share over the past two years.

During a video conference with jal shakti minister CR Patil, Siddaramaiah said the state had pushed ahead with the drinking water programme, spending Rs 17,555 crore, including the Centre's share of Rs 8,881 crore.

"It is unfortunate that, despite demonstrating uncompromising standards in execution and the state's capacity to drive the nation's progress, the Union govt continues to delay release of funds," he said.

JAL JEEVAN

He said the state stepped in to cover the Centre's share to keep the mission on track. "The Centre has starved Karnataka of funds, despite making budgetary allocations," the CM said.

Highlighting progress, Siddaramaiah said that of 101.3 lakh rural households, the state has provided more than 88 lakh functional tap connections, achieving close to 87% coverage as of April 1.

Of the 66,334 works undertaken, 48,789 have been completed, including 28,809 in-village projects and 19,980 works in schools and anganwadis. He also pointed to the use of technology in implementation, including the Jeeva Jal application, GIS-based asset management and real-time monitoring systems.

"Notably, over 1.5 lakh women were trained in water quality testing, strengthening community ownership," Siddaramaiah said.

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PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the general public that our Client Mr. Shyam Prasad Kudimule, S/o. Mr. Kudimule Mahalinga Bhat, aged about 57 years, residing at No. 234, 23rd Main, 19th Cross, J.P. Nagar 5th Phase, Bengaluru - 560078 (hereinafter referred to as the "Intended Purchaser"), has entered into an Agreement of Sale with the following persons (hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Vendors"):
1. Mr. George K., aged about 53 years, S/o Late Joseph, residing at No. 37, 1st Avenue, Teachers Colony, Koramangala, Bengaluru - 560034; and
2. M/s. JMJ Projects, a Registered Partnership Firm having its office at No. 311/55, Venkatapura 6th Cross, Koramangala 1st Block, Bengaluru - 560034, represented by its Partners:
1. Mrs. Saramma Raju, W/o Raju P.G., aged about 61 years,
4. Mr. Akash Raju, S/o Raju P.G., aged about 35 years,
5. Mr. Avinash Raju, S/o Raju P.G., aged about 46 years.
The Vendors have represented and assured our Client that they are the absolute owners in lawful possession and enjoyment of the immovable property more fully described in the Schedule hereunder ("Schedule Property"), and that the same is free from all encumbrances, charges, liens, acquisitions, litigations, claims, attachments, court proceedings, or any third-party rights of whatsoever nature.
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Failing which, it shall be presumed that no such claim exists, and our Client shall proceed to complete the purchase and registration of the Sale Deed in respect of the Schedule Property, without any further reference, and any such claim, if any, shall be deemed to have been waived and/or abandoned
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personal
CHANGE OF NAME
I, VANISHREE KHATOKAR, W/O Amarnath Khatokar born on 30 /01/1969 residing at No.260 MIG, 707 CHS, 4thPhase, Yelahanka New Town, Bangalore 560064, have changed my name to VANISHREE AMARNATH KHATOKAR vide affidavit dated 25/04/2026 at Yelahanka New Town.
I Sunitha R S, D/o Shambhulingappa R/o Arpitha Nilaya, N-Rampura have changed my name from Sunitha R S and Sunitha Rampura Shambhulingappa to Sunitha P Y for all future purposes
I, Sushama Varghese R/o 8/1, 2nd cross, J J Church Road, Ejipura, Bangalore - 560047, have changed my name to Sushma Varghese
I, MOHAMMED RIZWON S/o MOHAMMED UMER R/o 4th Cross, PG Layout, Tumkur-572101, I have changed my name and my father name from MOHAMED RIZWON TO MOHAMMED RIZWAN and my father name MOHAMMED UMER TO MOHAMMED UMAR ,For all future purposes, sworn before notary S.V .Sudhamani, tumkur dated 27.04.2026
I, TARA MARY FERNANDES residing at No. 14, Ivory Mansions, Block B, Prakruthi Township, Horamavu, Near Vincent Pallotti School, Kalyan Nagar, Bangalore 560043, have changed my name to TARA MARY DSOUZA vide affidavit dated 28-04-2026 before notary Y.R. Chandrasekar, Bangalore.
I, Abhilash J S/O Jayanna R/O H. No. 43, 2nd Cross, VTC: Naganahalli, P.O. Singanayakanahalli, Dist. Bengaluru (Karnataka)have changed my name to ABHILASH JAYANNA forever.
I, Shalini A D/o Ayothi, residing at #1 corporation qtrs payappa garden Shivajinagar Blore-51, have changed my name from Shalini A (Old name) to Hafsah Fathima (New name) & my date of birth is 28 May 1998 vide affidavit dated 29 April 2026, sworn before notary A.Idinabba Blore.
I, SMITHA IYER W/O Late K Muthuraman r/a B1-304 Shree Prakrithi Apts,Kodigehalli,Blr-97,have changed my name to SMITHA MUTHURAMAN vide affidavit dt 27.04.26 at Bangalore
I, Sujatha Premnath Agnihotri, W/O; Praveen Chandra Misra, R/O-FT NO.101,NO 468 Gagan Surya A, Bhuvaneshwari Nagar, BLR- 560032.Have changed my name as Sujatha Agnihotri.
I, Vachana Vadiraj (old name) R/o.1185, 26th Main TMC Layout, J P Nagar 1st Phase, RV Dental College, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560078. Changed my Name as Vachana Shetty W/o. Jeevan Kunder

personal
CHANGE OF NAME
I, MARTIN GREGORY TIMOTHY D'SOUZA residing at No. 14, Ivory Mansions, Block B, Prakruti Township, Horamavu, Near Vincent Pallotti School, Kalyan Nagar, Bangalore 560043 have changed my name to MARTIN GREGORY DSOUZA vide affidavit dated 28-04-2026 before notary Y.R. Chandrasekar, Bangalore.
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THIS is to bring to your notice that Syed TAHMID Yunus & Salma khan, 416, 4G Main, 2nd Block, HRBR Layout, Bengaluru, our sale deed document is missing since March 30, 2026. If found kindly return to above address.

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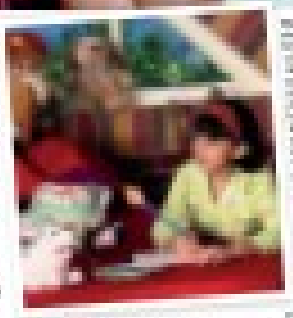
The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing - Henry Ford

I don't feel the need to explain everything about myself: Hansika Motwanni



Comparisons with my father keep me grounded, shares Jamie Lever

Tabu teams up with Nagarjuna for King100

'I love Gaurav's humour, but what won me over was his emotional intelligence'

TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026

UBT SENA NAMES AMBADAS DANVE, AND NOT UDDHAV, FOR MLC POLLS; 'UPSET' CONG TO FIELD OWN CANDIDATE

COURT ORDERS MANN'S APPEARANCE ON MAY 1, THE DAY A SPECIAL SESSION OF PUNJAB ASSEMBLY IS ALSO SCHEDULED

HACK OF THE DAY — **HIDE YOUR IP ADDRESS ON WHATSAPP CALLS**

WHAT IT SOLVES: Adds an extra privacy layer to WhatsApp calls by routing them in a way that helps hide your IP address from the other caller

WHAT TO DO: Turn on WhatsApp's IP-protection setting if you want extra privacy on voice and video calls

STEPS:

1. **Open** WhatsApp Settings
2. **Go to** Privacy and then Advanced
3. **Turn on** Protect IP address in calls
4. **Use** this for calls with people you do not know well
5. **Keep in mind** that call quality may behave differently depending on your connection

NOTE: Most people do not even know this setting exists. That is why it is such a strong privacy hack

SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

SUV crushed between 2 trucks, 6 dead

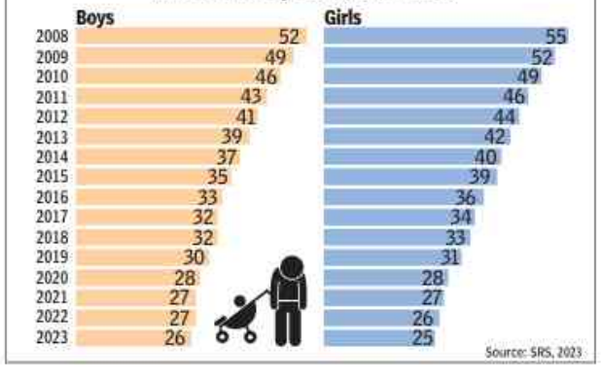
Six people were killed and five others injured after an SUV with 11 people was crushed between two trucks, overturned, and fell into a ditch in UP's Unnao Wednesday, reports **Faiz Siddiqui**. Suraj Singh of Pathai village, along with nine other family members, was on his way to a temple for the head tonsure ceremony of his three-year-old son. Police said the SUV tried to overtake a truck and collided with it when a second truck rammed into the SUV. The SUV and the rear truck then fell into a six-foot-deep ditch.

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

Infant deaths have halved since 2008, with girls now doing slightly better

Over 15 years, infant mortality rates nearly halved for both sexes. Girls, who had worse outcomes in 2008, recorded a slightly lower rate than boys by 2023

IMR over the years (2008-2023)



Source: SRS, 2023

Apex court rejects AIIMS plea against MTP for 15-year-old

AIIMS Tries To Defeat Rights Of Teen: SC

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The standoff between AIIMS and a Delhi woman keen on medical termination of the 28 weeks pregnancy of her 15-year-old daughter has got embroiled in legal proceedings with Supreme Court dismissing the hospital's review plea against its order allowing termination, the woman moving a contempt petition against the Union health secretary, and the Centre stepping in with a curative plea.

On April 24, a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan allowed medical termination on a plea from the mother and directed AIIMS-Delhi to undertake the exercise. In a detailed order, it had held that medical termination of unwanted pregnancy cannot be rejected on grounds of advance stage of pregnancy or normalcy of foetus. Not allowing the termination on that basis would "render the right to bodily autonomy nugatory", the division bench had said.

Three days later, AIIMS-Delhi sought review of the top court's order. Referring to medical ethics and right of an unborn child, AIIMS said it would lead to preterm delivery of a deformed baby needing prolonged Neonatal ICU (NICU) support.

The top court dvivision bench on Wednesday dismissed the review plea and said, "It is strange that the review petitioner-AIIMS is not inclined to obey the top court's order and instead is assailing the order of this court dated 24.04.2026 in order to defeat the constitutional rights of the minor daughter of the appellant."

Existing law adequate to deal with hate speech: SC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A Supreme Court bench on Wednesday said that there is no legal vacuum that could justify its intervention to deal with the problem of hate speeches, with the existing framework of criminal law adequately addressing the issue.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, however, said that govt can take a call on amending the law to tackle the menace in view of "societal changes".

The apex court ruling came on a batch of petitions seeking action against those involved in hate speeches and a mechanism to deal with such instances. "The contention that the field of hate speech remains legislatively unoccupied is misconceived," the bench said.

"While we decline to issue directions of the nature sought, we deem it appropriate to observe that the issues relating to hate speeches and rumour-mongering bear directly upon the preservation of fraternity, dignity and Constitutional order," it said.

The constitutional scheme founded upon doctrine of separation of powers does not permit judiciary to create new offences or expand contours of criminal liability through judicial directives, the apex court division bench stressed.

"The precedents of this court consistently affirm that while Constitutional courts may interpret the law and issue directions to secure the enforcement of fundamental rights, they cannot legislate or compel legislation," the bench said.

Dabholkar murder convict secures bail pending appeal in HC

Swati.Deshpande
@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: The Bombay HC on Wednesday granted bail to Sharad Kalaskar (33), who was convicted in May 2024 of the 2013 murder of rationalist **Narendra Dabholkar**.

Kalaskar had filed an appeal before the high court against his conviction by the trial court in Pune and sought bail till its disposal. Justices A S Gadkari and R R Bhonsale said not only is the likelihood remote for the appeal to be taken up for final hearing any time soon, but the evidence on record is doubtful. Kalaskar's identification was improper and had lost its sanctity, and two eyewitnesses' testimony created a doubt, HC said while setting the bail at Rs 50,000.

Dabholkar's son, Hamid, said an appeal against the grant of bail would be filed in the Supreme Court. "Kalaskar is also an accused in the (communist politician) Govind Pansare murder case," he said. The murderous assault happened on Aug 20, 2013, when Dabholkar, a crusader against superstition, was on his morning walk. HC had reserved the bail plea for orders on Dec 23, 2025.

Kalaskar's senior counsel Niteen Pradhan had assailed the validity of evidence, including the alleged assailant's very identity based on a photograph shown to witnesses, on the basis of which the alleged assailant was nailed by the trial court. The state, represented by additional public prosecutor Ashish Satpute, and CBI, represented by special public prosecutor Amit Munde, opposed the bail plea, saying two witnesses had seen the shooting.

HC recalls order adjourning case to 2046, next hearing on July 15

Mumbai: A day after posting to 2046 a decade-old Rs 20 crore defamation suit filed by a 90-year-old woman from south Mumbai after she insisted on pursuing it and was disinclined to accept an apology from the defendants, HC recalled that part of its order and posted the matter to July 15. The dispute arose in a Breach Candy housing society about a decade ago.

On Wednesday, Justice Jitendra Jain recalled his April 28 direction to hear the libel suit only after 2046. The deleted lines are: "I do not wish to state anything further except this matter should not be taken up for next 20 years." And para 3 that stands replaced said: "List this matter after 2046. At any cost, this matter should not be given priority on the ground that the petitioners are senior citizens or super senior citizens..." TNN

Abandoned husky found dead, 5 rescued, '30 missing'

Amisha.Rajani@timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: Five abandoned Siberian huskies trudging along a village road on the outskirts of Hyderabad under the scorching sun were rescued Wednesday, while a sixth was found dead nearby, possibly after suffering a heatstroke. Passers-by reported seeing a larger pack of pedigreed dogs wandering through a scrubland near Nandigaon village along the Shankarpally-Patancheru Road.

Animal rescuers from AASRA Foundation and SWAN suspect an unidentified breeder abandoned at least another 30 dogs in the area over a week ago. The rescued huskies were "extremely exhausted and weak" when they were found, said Gowri Vandana of AASRA Foundation. Villagers said they saw a truck bringing 35 to 40 Huskies to the area on the night of April 20. An investigation is under way.

The rescued dogs have been shifted to shelters

The rescued animals have been shifted to shelters for treatment. "We are awaiting their blood reports to understand if these dogs were used for any illegal experiments," said Harsh Kishor Bhatnagar of SWAN. The area is known to be the hub of illegal breeding. "Puppy mills have proliferated, catering to a market where a dog can fetch anywhere between Rs 50,000 and Rs 1 lakh," said an animal welfare worker.

DRDO, Navy conduct maiden salvo launch of 2 anti-ship missiles

Surendra.Singh@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: In a boost to Indian Navy's anti-ship warfare capabilities, Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and Navy on Wednesday successfully launched naval anti-ship missile-short range (NASM-SR) from a helicopter platform in Bay of Bengal off Odisha coast. During the trial, two missiles were launched in quick succession from the same helicopter, making it the first salvo launch of an advanced air-launched anti-ship missile system, the defence ministry said.

NASM-SR is India's first indigenous air-launched anti-ship missile. It features advanced, low-level sea-skimming, has a range of 55 km and supports fire-and-forget operation in all weather conditions and at all hours. All test objectives were fully met as per data captured using various range-tracking instruments like radar, electro-optical system and telemetry deployed by Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, the ministry said. Along with proving salvo launch capability, the missiles demonstrated waterline hit capability (ability to precisely strike a target vessel at or just below the waterline).

MILESTONE: A Navy helicopter carries out the maiden salvo launch of the Naval Anti-ship Missile-Short Range off the Odisha coast, Wednesday

Complimenting DRDO, Navy, IAF and the industry for the successful launch, defence minister Rajnath Singh said that "development of this missile will further enhance the capabilities of the defence forces".

The test launch was witnessed by senior scientists from DRDO, representatives from Navy and IAF and development-cum-production partners.

Norms revised on distance between college and teaching hosp

▶ Continued from page 1

In another change, NMC has revised norms related to the distance between a medical college and its teaching hospital. Instead of a travel-time cap of 30 minutes, the rules now prescribe a maximum distance of 10km. For northeastern and Himalayan states, the limit has been relaxed to 15km.

The amendments have been notified under NMC Act, 2019 and apply to both Undergraduate Medical Education Board's seat expansion guidelines and Graduate Medical Education Regulations, 2023.

The move is expected to benefit both govt and private medical colleges looking to scale up capacity.

Religion cannot be a matter of debate, but of conscience: SC

▶ Continued from page 1

Appearing before a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, A Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, A G Masih, P B Varale, R Mahadevan and J Bagchi, Jaising said Bindu did not dispute the 'naistik brahmachari' attributes of Ayyappa at Sabarimala, but the custom could not be the ground for violation of her fundamental right to enter the temple.

Jaising said the Indian Constitution was hailed as unique across the world because it gave prominence to individuals' fundamental rights. "If a woman wants to go into a temple, what legal injury is she causing to anyone? If the court wants to rule the other way round, let it go ahead and do it and the world will be watching how the Supreme Court of India is developing jurisprudence relating to rights of women," she said.

Justice Sundresh disagreed with the line of argument and asked if an individual's right to freedom of religion under Article 25(1) clashed with that right of a group of devotees or followers of a denomination, whose right should prevail?

"How do we enforce individual rights when it violates fundamental rights of others? Article 25(1) right of one cannot be pitted against another. If we agree with your submissions, it will lead to dangerous consequences. If each devotee goes to a common deity and exercises his freedom to worship in a different manner, the consequences will be disastrous for the religion or denomination itself," he said.

Justice Nagarathna agreed with him and said, "It will lead to annihilation of religion, and we do not want to be part of it. Matters of religion are not a subject on which either the court or the legislature can sit in judgment. It cannot be a matter of debate because it is a matter of conscience." Justice Amanullah asked whether a practice or custom, which has crystallised over centuries, should be removed by a court to ensure that a person must go into a temple despite knowing that it would hurt the religious feelings of the majority of the followers of the denomination. Arguments will continue on Thursday.

Case delay due to bifurcation of state: UP govt

▶ Continued from page 1

The officer was facing trial for offences punishable under IPC Sections 147 (rioting), 323 (causing hurt) and 504 (insult) and Railway Act's section 120 (inquiry into accident).

The criminal case, registered in 1989, was pending before the additional chief judicial magistrate (railway) in Prayagraj

Uttar Pradesh govt told the Supreme Court the delay was because of the bifurcation of the state in 2000 that created Uttarakhand. The accused were living in Uttarakhand and they were not appearing before the court in UP, the state said. The Supreme Court had last week stayed proceedings against the police officer. A detailed order is awaited.

PM inaugurates Ganga eway, says it will be linked to Haridwar

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday lauded the naming of the Ganga Expressway after the Ganga river and announced that the 594-km greenfield corridor connecting Prayagraj and Meerut will be extended to Haridwar in Uttarakhand.

Addressing a gathering after inaugurating the expressway, Modi said govt would also be working on a link expressway to Farrukhabad and connect it with other expressways. Calling it a reflection of the vision of the "double-engine govt", Modi said the project symbolises the blending of "vikas (development)" and "virasat (heritage)". The PM emphasised that rapid infrastructure development holds the key to accelerating the country's growth. Hailing the speedy construction of the Ganga Expressway, Modi said the project was completed in less than five years after its foundation stone was laid by him in Dec 2021.

Describing the expressway stretch as akin to a "teertha", PM Modi said it would become a lifeline for UP's development, opening up new economic opportunities. He added that the corridor would not only facilitate faster travel but also serve as a gateway for industrial growth and employment generation.

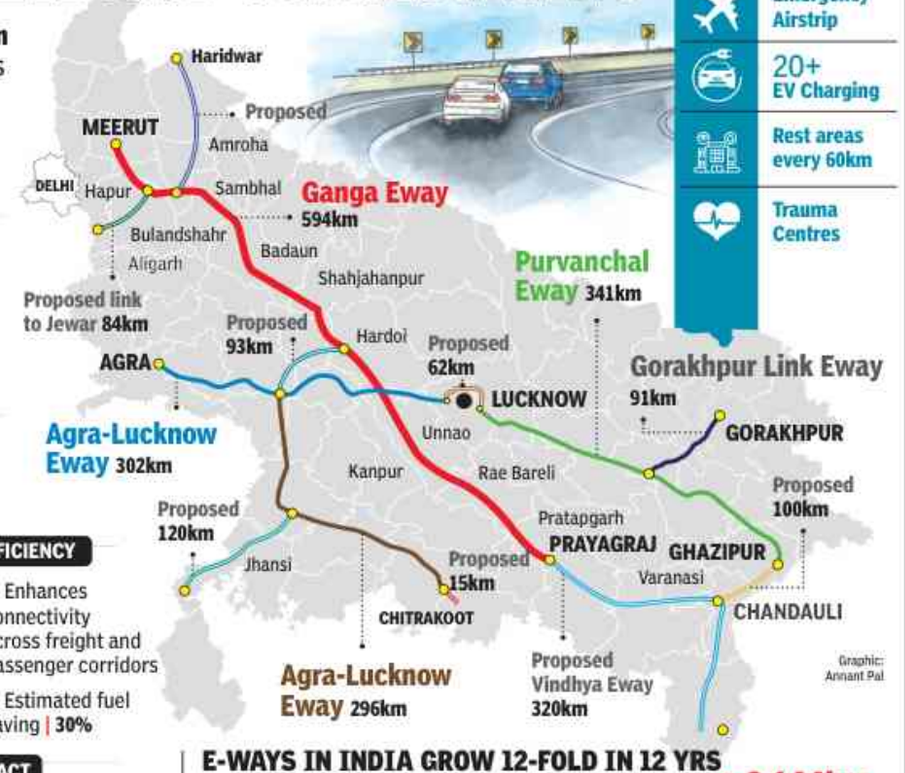
GANGA EWAY

UP'S LONGEST EXPRESSWAY TO BOOST SPEED AND CONNECTIVITY

The 594-km corridor from Meerut to Prayagraj links key expressways, cuts travel time significantly, and adds to UP's lead in expressway network

- Covers 12 districts and 519 villages
- **6 lanes, expandable to 8**
- Developed in record time of **3 years and 3 months**, under PPP model by UPEIDA

PROJECT COST
₹36,230cr
(incl. land acquisition)



437+ Underpasses
21+ Flyovers
Emergency Airstrip
20+ EV Charging
Rest areas every 60km
Trauma Centres

CONNECTIVITY & EFFICIENCY

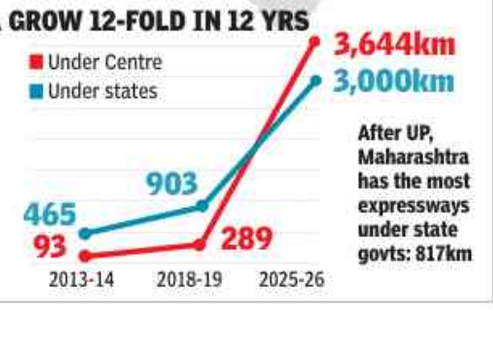
- Travel time reduced from **11 hrs to 6 hrs**
- Average speed improved from **50-60 kmph** to **100 kmph**
- Enhances connectivity across freight and passenger corridors
- Estimated fuel saving | **30%**

ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Annual logistics savings estimated at **₹25,000-30,000 cr**
- Potential to increase UP's **GDP** by over **₹1 lakh cr**
- Expected to generate **3 lakh** direct and indirect jobs
- Boost to state revenue via industrial output and land value appreciation

E-WAYS IN INDIA GROW 12-FOLD IN 12 YRS

From just 558km in 2013–14, the country's network of expressways and access-controlled highways has expanded to around **6,640km** today. Much of this recent expansion has been driven by the Centre



After UP, Maharashtra has the most expressways under state govts: 817km

Piprahwa Buddha relics reach Ladakh

Ambika Pandit | TNN

Leh: In a strong message for world peace, the sacred holy Piprahwa relics of Buddha have reached Ladakh from Delhi's National Museum for a fortnight-long, first-of-its-kind exposition starting May 1.

The festival seeks to reinforce a sense of community in Ladakh where there is a significantly large Buddhist presence. Men, women and children of all age groups had traveled from across Leh to catch a glimpse of the relics that were taken in a grand procession to Jivetsal, the venue of the exposition beginning Friday, which marks the 2,569th Buddha Purnima.

The opening ceremony of festival will be attended by several Union ministers, including Home Minister Amit Shah; chief ministers of Buddhist-dominated states; ambassadors; and Buddhist leaders. Leh and Zanskar are proposed to host many programmes, exhibitions and seminars over the fortnight.

The relics will be available for public veneration from May 2 to May 10, followed by exposition in Zanskar on May 11 and 12, and thereafter at Dharma Centre in Leh from May 13 to 14. They will be flown back to Delhi on May 15.

Madras HC appoints Hindu couple as guardians of a Muslim child

K.Kaushik@timesofindia.com

Madurai: Madras high court has appointed a Hindu couple as guardian of a Muslim child, observing that the welfare of the minor child and the sentiments of the appellant and his wife towards her are of paramount importance.

The appellant, a Hindu man, had challenged a Madurai family court's order dismissing his petition for appointing him as the legal guardian of the child till she attained majority.

The man and his wife, who got married in 2012, decided to go for adoption since they did not have a child. A Muslim woman, a daily wager known to them for more than 10 years, had three children. Struggling to provide basic amenities to her children after her husband passed away, she came forward to give away her youngest child, born in 2023, to the couple.

The appellant and his wife started taking care of the child. In order to legalise the adoption, he filed a petition before the family court. However, it dismissed his plea saying it was a girl child, and the appellant and his wife were strangers. Hearing the appeal, a division bench took note of the fact that the child had been taken care of by the appellant and his wife since her birth. She has been calling the appellant and his wife as father and mother, and the biological mother had wholeheartedly consented to appoint the appellant as the guardian, the court noted.

It observed that the Guardians and Wards Act 1890, is religion-neutral and it will apply to every person desirous of being appointed as a guardian of a minor. Holding that it will be in the interest of the child to appoint the appellant as the legal guardian, since she recognises him and his wife as the parents, the court set aside the family court order.

Crude imports in 2025-26 up nearly 1%

New Delhi: Driven by higher consumption of petroleum products, India's crude imports in 2025-26 increased nearly 1%, despite a 17% fall in purchases in March due to disruption of trade routes amid the West Asia crisis, **reports Atul Mathur**.

According to provisional oil and gas data released by govt, India purchased 245.3 million tonnes (MT) of crude in FY26, compared with 243.2 MT in the previous year. Imports in March fell to 18.9 MT from 22.8 MT.

India's net oil and gas import bill, however, reduced by over 10% in FY26, from $131.2 billion in 2024-25 to $117.5 billion last year, due to subdued Indian oil basket prices, according to provisional data compiled by the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell.

‘Pure milk’, ‘protein shakes’: How dry Bihar gets its high

A decade of prohibition in the state has pushed drinking underground, creating coded doorstep liquor deliveries, a booming black market, rising drug abuse, and repeated hooch tragedies

Illustration: **Uday Deb**

Madan.Kumar@timesofindia.com

In Kankarbagh, an upscale locality in the heart of Patna, ‘pure milk’ does not mean any packet of pasteurized milk. It is a code word for expensive blended Scotch whisky, which comes in a tetra pack to avoid prying eyes.

In dry Bihar, where prohibition for the past 10 years has turned ‘sonapapdi’ into code for expensive alcohol — smuggled from Jharkhand, UP and Bengal — the illicit business isn't just surviving; it's thriving, like a high-stakes game of cat-and-mouse.

In many district towns and in state capital Patna, ‘samosewala’, ‘grocerywala’ and ‘sanyasi baba’ are code words for young boys who ensure timely home delivery of IMFL (India-made foreign liquor).

Bihar has been ‘dry’ since April 2016, but that's only on paper. In reality, it's a thirsty, thirsty land — with a meticulous home-delivery system, faster than most pizza deliveries.

‘Sir, I Deliver Happiness’

Prohibition has created a flourishing black market, where liquor is delivered to the doorstep by young agents who — according to opposition leaders — operate with the tacit understanding of a thriving, illicit supply chain.

Even after a decade of complete ban on liquor, the demand for alcohol hasn't died. It has just gone under the rug.

Engaged in the racket of home delivery in many posh localities of Patna, ‘tuition ma'am’, ‘nurse ma'am’ and ‘parlourwali’ are codes for young women, who will deliver liquor.

Meet Munna, a home-delivery agent in Patna. He wears a formal shirt, rides a scooter, and carries a laptop bag. “Sir, I deliver happiness,” he told this **TOI** correspondent, adding that the “happiness” was premium IMFL smuggled from UP or Jharkhand. Munna's best trick is delivering bottles hidden inside a hollowed-out food carton of branded companies. He goes to homes posing as a ‘grocery-wala’.

In mohallas of Patna, prohibition didn't stop parties; it just made them hush-hush.

Meet “Sanyasi Baba”, the unofficial CEO of a localised home-delivery network. While major apps deliver grocery in 10 minutes, Sanyasi's network delivers in five minutes — for a premium of course, with prices jumping from Rs 200 to Rs 600 for a 180ml pack, depending on the brand.

The system is almost foolproof: there are no shop or signboards, just a WhatsApp group called “Health & Fitness”. One message — “Need two protein shakes and two pure milk” — and a “milkman” arrives in minutes on a motorbike, carrying heavy milk cans.

The prohibition policy remains one of India's most contested social experiments, marked by measurable social benefits, heavy fiscal costs, and persistent enforcement failures. Introduced by then chief minister Nitish Kumar through the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016, the ban was framed as a response to women's demands to reduce alcoholism, poverty and domestic violence.

A decade later, its record is sharply divided between improvements in household welfare and public health on one side, and revenue collapse, black-market expansion and judicial overload on the other.

The legal market's disappearance did not eliminate demand. Instead, it created space for a vast illicit trade. Estimates suggest that a parallel liquor economy, worth Rs 25,000 crore to Rs 30,000 crore, now operates in Bihar.

Moreover, the decade-long prohibition has turned everyday citizens into inventive bootleggers, whose feats of engineering could give top mechanics a run for their money.

Smugglers have recently adopted what the police call a “ninja technique”. In one case that went viral on social media, a man was caught in Feb with dozens of bottles hidden inside a hollowed-out plastic chair strapped to his motorcycle. Taking a page out of the blockbuster movie ‘Pushpa’, smugglers in Kishanganj district were caught transporting a haul of 862 litres of foreign liquor hidden under layers of fresh tomato and cabbage. The truck looked like a simple vegetable delivery en route to Muzaffarpur, but the scent of whisky eventually overpowered the aroma of the produce, giving the game away.

In Nawada, police discovered a motorcycle, where the fuel tank was used entirely for liquor. To keep the bike running, the smugglers had installed a tiny, separate petrol box under the seat. Liquor pouches or bottles are also stuffed inside cut-out gas cylinders, water supply tankers and ambulances. In Saran, a tanker bearing govt slogans — such as “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan” and “Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao” — was found stuffed with 330 cartons of Haryana-made whisky.

What's Your Poison?

The ban also wiped out a large legal retail economy. Before prohibition, Bihar had around 5,480 licensed liquor shops, supporting the livelihoods of an estimated 30,000 to 40,000 families.

While the scale of criminal enforcement has been staggering, with 16 lakh tipplers being arrested in the last 10 years and 4.5 crore litres of liquor seized, there's been another unintended consequence: a rise in substance abuse, which has wreaked havoc among youth.

Ganja, opium, charas and cough syrups have become the go-to choices for habitual tipplers, who have no access to expensive alcohol.

Another grave consequence has been the spread of spurious liquor. In rural areas, the failure to eliminate demand has encouraged the sale of low-quality — and, sometimes, toxic — alcohol, leading to repeated hooch tragedies. Over the decade, hundreds have died from methanol poisoning in districts, including Siwan, Begusarai and East Champaran. The scale of these deaths eventually forced the state govt to restore compensation of Rs 4 lakh for the victims' families.

Among younger users, prohibition appears to have shifted consumption patterns, rather than ending addiction. Studies have found that more than 25% of habitual drinkers moved to other substances: even synthetic drugs, apart from ganja and charas. This rise in ‘dry drugs’ has become one of the most worrying side-effects of the ban.

As Bihar enters its second decade of prohibition, political unity around the policy is showing signs of stress. Women's groups remain its strongest support base, but calls for reassessment are growing across party lines.

While govt has shown no signs of retreat, with new chief minister, BJP's Samrat Choudhary, saying the ban will stay, Bihar is at a crossroads. One path would involve a softer framework, perhaps closer to the Gujarat model of regulated permits. The other is to continue with rigid prohibition despite mounting evidence of leakage, black-market growth and institutional strain.

> Who will dare to lift the liquor ban, which was enforced by a personality like Nitish Kumar, and appreciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi?
> —SAMRAT CHOUDHARI, CHIEF MINISTER

> The law has been a complete failure... creating a ₹**40,000 crore** illegal alcohol economy. It targets the poor while the real suppliers go free
> —TEJASHWI YADAV, LEADER OF OPPOSITION

REVENUES PEGGED BACK

- Pre-prohibition, Bihar earned ₹**3,142 crore** annually from excise duty. Cumulative revenue loss over 10 yrs is estimated to have crossed ₹**30,000 crore**
- Bihar had 5,480 licensed liquor shops, supporting livelihoods of 30,000 to 40,000 families
- 58% of respondents in a Patna University survey said they have access to alcohol, often at twice the earlier market price
- Former CJI N V Ramana described Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016, as an example of legislation drafted with a “lack of foresight”

TIMES NATION

Araghchi dials Jaishankar to discuss W Asia situation

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

This was the sixth conversation between Jaishankar (left) and Araghchi since the start of the conflict on Feb 28

New Delhi: External affairs minister S Jaishankar spoke to his Iranian counterpart Seyed Abbas Araghchi Wednesday, and according to the Iranian embassy here, exchanged views on the latest developments related to the US-Iran ceasefire, bilateral relations, as well as regional and international issues.

Jaishankar said on X that he received a call from Araghchi. “Had a detailed conversation about various aspects of the current situation. We agreed to remain in close touch,” he said.

This was the sixth conversation between the two foreign ministers since the start of the West Asia conflict on Feb 28 and subsequent threats related to the Strait of Hormuz. It is understood that Jaishankar stressed the need for resolving issues through dialogue and diplomacy and also safe passage for commercial shipping through the strait.

The conversation also took place ahead of a meeting in India of the Brics foreign ministers next month. Iran is a member of the grouping and Araghchi is expected to participate in the meeting. There's no official confirmation yet though.

Brics has struggled to speak in one voice over the conflict so far and the meeting of special envoys last week in India, which is the current group chair, ended without a joint statement in the absence of a consensus. India attributed this to the presence of countries party to the conflict in the grouping.

After weeks of Iranian blockade of the strait, the US has imposed its own naval blockade of Iranian imports to force Tehran to reopen the strait. According to a Reuters report from Washington, President Trump discussed how to mitigate the impact of a possible months-long blockade of Iran's ports with US oil firms. Tehran warned of “unprecedented military action” against continued US blockading of Iran-linked vessels.

India, UAE in talks for stopover by Modi next month

New Delhi: India and the UAE are discussing a brief stopover by PM Narendra Modi in the Gulf country during his fournation Europe tour next month.

Official sources have clarified though that discussions are still in progress and the visit has not been finalised yet.

Modi will be travelling to Norway next month for India-Nordic summit. Later, he will travel to the Netherlands, Sweden and Italy.

If the PM's proposed stopover in the UAE materialises, it will offer India an important opportunity to express solidarity with a country with which it has one of the most consequential strategic partnerships in the Gulf region.

Modi has already spoken twice to president Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan . TNN

Porn clip disrupts Delhi high court CJ hearing thrice; investigation ordered

Abhinav.Garg@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Virtual proceedings before the chief justice of Delhi High Court were disrupted thrice on Wednesday after a person logged in and played pornographic content. At one stage, a participant under the name ‘Sh*tjeet Sighn’ played an obscene video. At the same point, an audio in the background announced, “Shut down the meeting right now. You've been hacked.” The repeated interruptions prompted the bench to immediately suspend virtual proceedings — it was dealing with a clutch of PILs — and break for lunch. The incident raises concerns about the security and resilience of the video conferencing system used by the court. Hosted on the Cisco Webex platform, the virtual hearings allow lawyers, govt officials, litigants and media to enter their email IDs and log in to either watch or make arguments in case they are party to a matter.

The incident has raised concerns about the security and resilience of the videoconferencing system used by the court

While the final control to permit virtual entry to such proceedings remains with the court master of each court, no one is usually barred from viewing proceedings as long as a user is muted and doesn't create a disturbance. However, the option to share content remains disabled, which is what appears to have been breached on Wednesday.

When the high court assembled after lunch, Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya shared his concerns about circulation and dissemination of the recordings of the incident. The meetings were also kept in locked modeeven as the chief justice said that directions have been issued to the registrar general on the administrative sideof the matter. He underlined that recording of court proceedings is prohibited under high court rules, and if any unauthorised content is circulated, the authorities would detect it.

The court administration reported the incident to Delhi Police's Intelligence Fusion & Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit, which deals with cybercrime, for a thorough investigation into the online breach.

In 2024, Supreme Court had temporarily disabled its YouTube channel after it was allegedly hacked and used to broadcast videos promoting a cryptocurrency. In that case, the hackers renamed the channel and streamed the unauthorised videos, before corrective action was taken. The country's higher judiciary has significantly expanded its digital and virtual hearing systems in recent years under the e-Courts project. Live streaming and video conferencing have become central to judicial accessibility, particularly after the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated adoption of virtual proceedings.

West Bengal records highest polling since Independence

▸ Continued from page 1

Highest ever percentage of polling in West Bengal since Independence. Chunav ka parv, Paschim Bengal ka garv (the highest turnout is a moment of glory for the state),” chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said. The overall women's turnout was 93.2%, and the men's 91.7%, EC said.

Wednesday's high turnout ensured that more votes were cast this time (6.3 crore) than in 2021 (5.9 crore) despite SIR reducing the size of the electorate from 7.3 crore in 2021 to 6.8 crore this year.

Conventional logic says a higher turnout often reflects an anti-incumbency sentiment. This time, however, the very visible public ire at 27 lakh existing voters being deleted from the electoral roll, and the way in which the SIR process was conducted, has muddled things, making straightforward assumptions and interpretations of the vote bump risky.

Kolkata, known to be more vote-averse than the rest of Bengal, joined the 22 other districts in bumping up the vote percentage; 88.4% of the city's electorate voted on Wednesday, EC estimates at 8pm said.

That meant a record jump of over 28% over its 2021 performance of a little more than 60%. Kolkata (North) recorded 89.3% polling till 8pm, and was slightly better than Kolkata (South), where it was 87.7%.

East Burdwan led the rush at the polling booth on Wednesday with a 93.6% turnout and was followed by South 24 Parganas (92.6%) and North 24 Parganas (92.4%). Hooghly, Nadia and Howrah recorded voter turnouts of 91.8%, 91.9% and 91.7%, respectively.

EC officials attributed the unprecedented voter turnout percentage to the weeding of “non-existent voters” (which reduced the overall electorate size), “enhanced measures” that gave voters “a greater sense of security”, and a large number of high-rises getting polling booths inside the complexes. Only one death was attributed to political clashes this election season (in Asansol, where a Congress worker was killed after the first phase of polling).

The number in 2021 was 24 (till the counting of votes) and seven in 2016.

Around 700 companies of CAPF will remain stationed in Bengal till at least the counting of votes even as the other 1,800-odd companies will be getting out of Bengal from Friday itself. ADGP Anand Kumar said 19 people were arrested on Wednesday besides the 687 preventive arrests. EC received 77 complaints of vote-tampering, state chief electoral officer Manoj Agarwal said, adding that 23 of them were found to be “prima facie true”.

TN's leave restriction for third pregnancy unlawful: Madras HC

Sureshkumar.K@timesofindia.com

Chennai: A Tamil Nadu govt order restricting maternity leave for third pregnancy to 12 weeks is unjustifiable and against the law settled by the Supreme Court, Madras high court ruled on Wednesday.

The bench division bench of Justice R Suresh Kumar and Justice N Senthilkumar set aside the orders of the principal district judge, Villupuram, dated March 27, 2026, which rejected the representation of the petitioner seeking maternity leave from Feb 2, 2026 to Feb 1, 2027, and the Motor Accidents Claims Tribunal, Villupuram, which asked her to rejoin on April 27, 2026. “This kind of restriction is against the dictum of the Supreme Court as well as this court. The same cannot be approved by this court,” the bench said.

“In pregnancy, whether first, second or third, the suffering would be the same and the pre-delivery as well as the post-delivery care that a mother needs to take is same,” the court said.

“Therefore, no discrimination could be shown by the govt in approving the maternity benefits, especially maternity leave for the third pregnancy, to the employees,” the bench said.

The petitioner, Shayee Nisha, is an employee of the motor accidents claims tribunal in Villupuram and her leave approving authority is the principal district judge. “... several policy decisions are being taken by the Tamil Nadu govt for the welfare of the women folks. Several new schemes are also being introduced for the upliftment of the women. (But) restricting the maternity benefits to the pregnant woman only to 12 weeks is not in consonance with its consistent policy, nor is it in consonance with the law settled in this regard by the Supreme Court,” the court said.

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Tanya Mathias
5th September, 1964 - 29th April, 2026
D/O Dr.Veronica Mathias & Late Michael Mathias
Sister of Ben & Stephen

Her mortal remains have been donated to NIMHANS for neuro scientific research.
A memorial service will be held later.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”
MATTHEW 5:8

OBITUARY
SAD DEMISE

“If we are children again, we want no one else but You, for our Dad. We love you Pa, today, everyday”.

Mr. J S Victor Bosco
(87 YRS)
With profound grief we announce the peaceful passing on of our Father & Grandfather on 28.04.2026
Funeral mass : Friday 1st May 2026 at St Anthony's Church, Munnekollal, Blore 37
Time 11 am
Burial : Kalpali Cemetary
Joseph's and Bosco's Family, Friend's and Relative's

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FEDBANK FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD. AUCTION NOTICE

This is to inform the public at large that FEDBANK FINANCIAL SERVICES LTD. has decided to conduct Auction of Gold ornaments belonging to accounts (mentioned below) which are NPA (Non-performing Asset) or margin breach account/s or any account/s falling into the loan recall clause as specified in the **terms & condition** of the Loan. The Auction would be held as per the schedule provided below:

Loan A/c Number	Base Branch	District 1 Contact	District Auction Date
FEDGL00220017584	HARIHAR - 8147533256	DAVANGERE - 9110855606	30/05/2026
FEDGL03930013397	Madhugiri - 9972981737	B H Road - 8904344610	02/06/2026

Change in Venue or Date, if any, will be displayed on our Website https://www.fedfina.com/gold-loan/special-sections/auction-venue/. Customer who want to release their ornaments shall visit any of the above branch/es or contact at the number mentioned above on/or before auction Date subject to the terms and condition applicable. Auction will be conducted at respective Districts. In case the auction does not get completed on the given date due to any reasons, the auction in respect thereto shall be conducted on subsequent working days at district level as per above schedule. This would continue till the auction process is over. On failure of the first offline auction at District level, auction will also be initiated through the E-auction platforms of SAMIL https://gold.samil.in and/or e-Procurement Technologies Ltd. (AuctionTiger) - https://egold.auctiontiger.net/.

All participating bidders will be intimated subsequently with respect to acceptance or rejection of bids submitted by them.

Dated : 30.04.2026
Place : Karnataka

For, sd/- Authorised Signatory
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22-SHAM NATH MARG, DELHI – 110 054
PUBLIC NOTICE

Applications are invited for engagement of the one post of Senior Consultant (Environmental Health) and one post of Senior Consultant (Capacity Building), for a period of one year at NCDC, Delhi on contract basis through Screening cum Selection Mode at NCDC, 22-Sham Nath Marg (Near Civil Lines Metro Station), Delhi- 110 054, as under: -

Name of the post	No. of posts	Place of Posting
Senior Consultant (Environmental Health)	1	Delhi
Senior Consultant (Capacity Building)	1	

The last date of submission of application is **16.05.2026.** The application must reach this office on or before **16.05.2026,** by speed post/ by hand on all working days from 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM at General Services Section, Room No. 202, NCDC, 22 -Sham Nath Marg, Delhi - 110054. Application received after 16.05.2026 will not be entertained.

After scrutiny of the application forms, only eligible candidates as per ToR will be informed through email to appear for interview with date and time.

The Educational Qualification, ToR and other conditions may be viewed on the NCDC Website: **www.ncdc.mohfw.gov.in.**

NOTE: The Competent Authority reserves the right to modify or cancel selection process (in part or full), if need so arises without issuing any further reasons whatsoever.

Administrative Officer
Email: kashyapbalu32@gmail.com
Phone No. 011-23954813

CBC 17129/11/0005/2627

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL OFFICER AND COMPETENT AUTHORITY
(IMA & other company scam cases)
Podium Block, 3rd floor, Vishweshwaraya Towers, Bengaluru - 560 001
Ph: 080-29565353 | email: splocaima21@gmail.com

No:SPLOCA/ADM/30/2024-25 **Date:28.04.2026**

PUBLICATION

Sub: Invitation of Applications/Proposals for hiring human resource services on a contract basis for the Office of the Special Officer and Competent Authority (IMA and other company fraud cases)

Resumes are invited from interested individual candidates for filling the following various posts on a contract basis in the Office of the Special Officer and Competent Authority (IMA and other KPIDFE cases). Applicants are instructed to submit their proposals to the said office.

Details of the Post **Last date for submission of proposals: 09.05.2026**

Post/ Designation: Audit Officer, No. of Post: 1, Maximum Contract wage per month (Actual shall depend upon Qualification & Experience): Rs.55,000/- to Rs.60,000/-. Qualification: M.Com with atleast 10 years' experience in accounts in any reputed Firm/Government organization in an equivalent position. The applicant must have sound knowledge of and familiarity with single entry accounting.

The Position to be filled is a post created vide Government Order and is renewable year on year. It is a post on contract, renewable on satisfactory performance with periodic enhancement of salary scales, **not a permanent government service.**

Sd/-
Special Officer & Competent Authority
IMA & other KPIDFE Cases, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/410/CCL/2026-27

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PUBLIC NOTICE

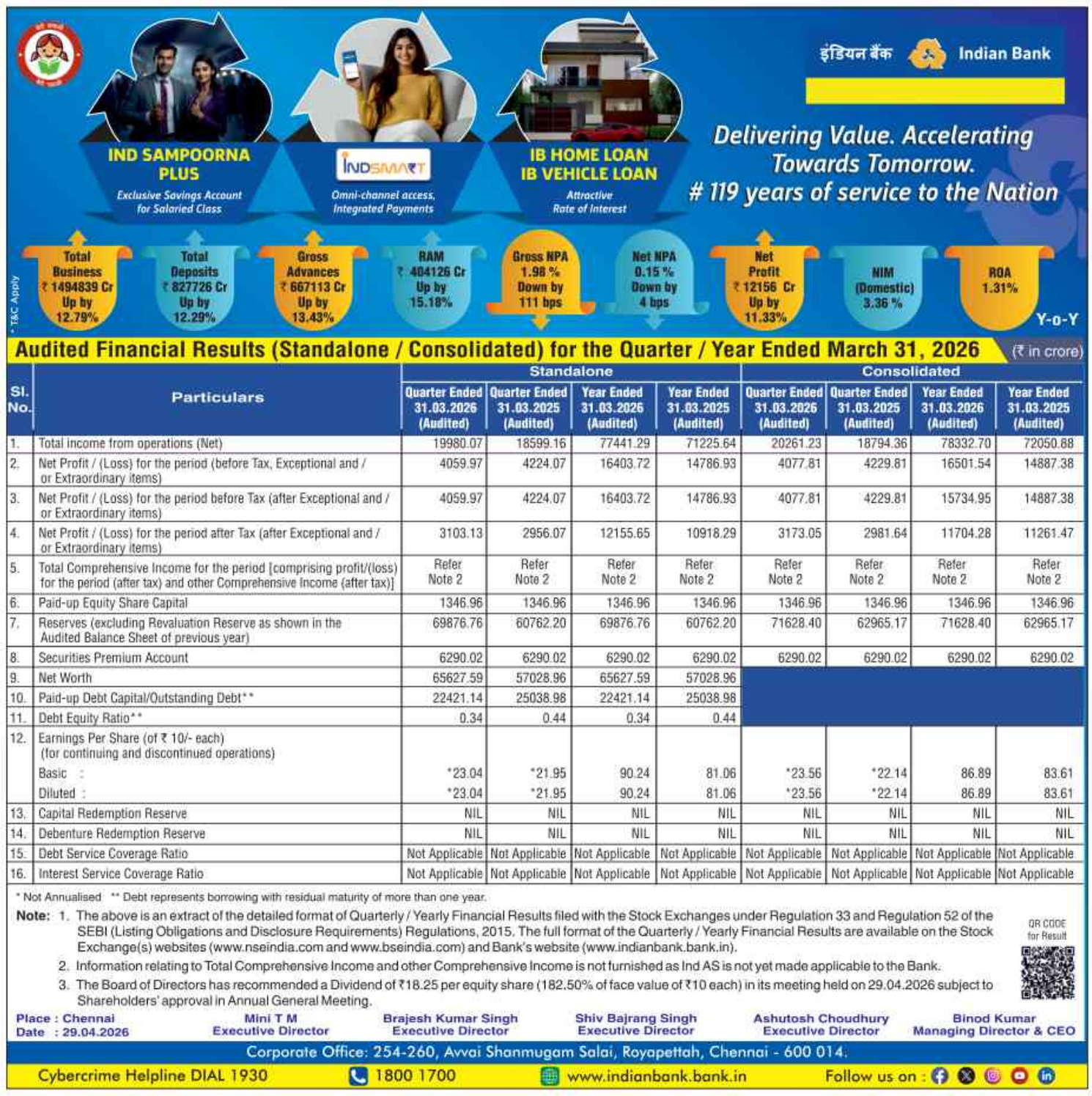
Public are hereby informed that our client intends to acquire a vacant residential Site No. 231/3 measuring 2,800 square feet in the layout known as 'Ferns Residency' more fully described in Schedule hereto ("Schedule Property") from Mr. Jayakrishnan Karunakaran Nair (son of Mr. N. Karunakaran Nair) ("Owner"). The Owner represented that he is the sole and absolute owner in lawful possession and enjoyment of the Schedule Property and having unrestricted rights of alienation over the same.Public are notified that any person having any right, title, claim or interest in the Schedule Property or any objection/s of any manner whatsoever to the above transaction are hereby called upon to notify the undersigned with supporting documents within 14 (fourteen) days from the date of this notice. If no such claim is received, it would be deemed that the said Owner has a clear and marketable title to the Schedule Property as mentioned herein below and that no person has any subsisting claim or objection thereto. Any such claims, if made thereafter, shall be deemed to have been waived and/or abandoned.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the immovable property being a vacant residential Site bearing No. 231/3 measuring East to West 70 feet and North to South 40 feet totally measuring 2,800 square feet in the layout known as 'Ferns Residency' formed in Survey Nos. 38 and 23/4 situated at K. Narayanapura Village, K. R. Puram Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk and bearing E-Khata No. 7478368335, and bounded on its:

East by : Plot No. 232;
West by : Plot No. 231/2;
North by : Plot Nos. 239 & 240/1; and
South by: Private Road.

S. NAGARAJ AND SRILAKSHMI V. K,
Advocates
No.11, 17th Cross, 15th Main,
JP Nagar, 5th Phase,
Bengaluru 560 078.



Audited Financial Results (Standalone / Consolidated) for the Quarter / Year Ended March 31, 2026

(₹ in crore)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated			
		Quarter Ended 31.03.2026 (Audited)	Quarter Ended 31.03.2025 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2026 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2025 (Audited)	Quarter Ended 31.03.2026 (Audited)	Quarter Ended 31.03.2025 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2026 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2025 (Audited)
1.	Total income from operations (Net)	19980.07	18599.16	77441.29	71225.64	20261.23	18794.36	78332.70	72050.88
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	4059.97	4224.07	16403.72	14786.93	4077.81	4229.81	16501.54	14887.38
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	4059.97	4224.07	16403.72	14786.93	4077.81	4229.81	15734.95	14887.38
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	3103.13	2956.07	12155.65	10918.29	3173.05	2981.64	11704.28	11261.47
5.	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [comprising profit/(loss) for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	Refer Note 2	Refer Note 2	Refer Note 2	Refer Note 2	Refer Note 2	Refer Note 2	Refer Note 2	Refer Note 2
6.	Paid-up Equity Share Capital	1346.96	1346.96	1346.96	1346.96	1346.96	1346.96	1346.96	1346.96
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Audited Balance Sheet of previous year)	69876.76	60762.20	69876.76	60762.20	71628.40	62965.17	71628.40	62965.17
8.	Securities Premium Account	6290.02	6290.02	6290.02	6290.02	6290.02	6290.02	6290.02	6290.02
9.	Net Worth	65627.59	57028.96	65627.59	57028.96				
10.	Paid-up Debt Capital/Outstanding Debt**	22421.14	25038.98	22421.14	25038.98				
11.	Debt Equity Ratio**	0.34	0.44	0.34	0.44				
12.	Earnings Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)								
	Basic :	*23.04	*21.95	90.24	81.06	*23.56	*22.14	86.89	83.61
	Diluted :	*23.04	*21.95	90.24	81.06	*23.56	*22.14	86.89	83.61
13.	Capital Redemption Reserve	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
14.	Debenture Redemption Reserve	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
15.	Debt Service Coverage Ratio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
16.	Interest Service Coverage Ratio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

* Not Annualised ** Debt represents borrowing with residual maturity of more than one year.

Note: 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Yearly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange(s) websites (www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com) and Bank's website (www.indianbank.bank.in).

2. Information relating to Total Comprehensive Income and other Comprehensive Income is not furnished as Ind AS is not yet made applicable to the Bank.

3. The Board of Directors has recommended a Dividend of ₹18.25 per equity share (182.50% of face value of ₹10 each) in its meeting held on 29.04.2026 subject to Shareholders' approval in Annual General Meeting.

QR CODE for Result

Place : Chennai **Date : 29.04.2026**

Mini T M Executive Director | **Brajesh Kumar Singh** Executive Director | **Shiv Bajrang Singh** Executive Director | **Ashutosh Choudhury** Executive Director | **Binod Kumar** Managing Director & CEO

Corporate Office: 254-260, Avvai Shanmugam Salai, Royapettah, Chennai - 600 014.

Cybercrime Helpline DIAL 1930 | 1800 1700 | www.indianbank.bank.in | Follow us on :

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)

भर्ती सूचना/RECRUITMENT NOTICE

भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण (भा.रा.रा.प्रा.) **संविदा आधार पर** निम्नलिखित पदों के लिए भर्ती हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है:–

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) invites applications for recruitment to the following posts **on contract basis:-**

Name of the posts	No. of posts*
प्रतिष्ठित बाह्य पेशेवर (परिवहन योजनाकार) Eminent External Professional (Transport Planner)	01
प्रतिष्ठित बाह्य पेशेवर (परिवहन अर्थशास्त्री) Eminent External Professional (Transport Economist)	01

*पदों की संख्या भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की आवश्यकता के अनुसार बढ़ाई या घटाई जा सकती है।
*Number of posts may increase / decrease as per requirement of NHAI.

2. पात्रता मानदंड और अन्य शर्तें भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट **www.nhai.gov.in** पर देखे जा सकते हैं। Eligibility criteria and other conditions may be seen on NHAI's website **www.nhai.gov.in**

3. **आवेदन जमा करना:** इच्छुक और पात्र उम्मीदवार अपने आवेदन **29.05.2026 (सायं 06:00 बजे तक)** भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध लिंक के माध्यम से केवल ऑनलाइन जमा करें।
Submission of Applications: Applications are to be submitted online only. Eligible candidates may apply online on the link provided on the website of NHAI by **29.05.2026 (upto 06:00 PM).**

4. इस विज्ञापन के संबंध में शुद्धिपत्र/अनुशेष/निरस्तीकरण, यदि कोई होगा तो, उसे केवल भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट पर प्रकाशित किया जाएगा।
Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancelation to this advertisement, if any, shall be published on NHAI website only.

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

Bengaluru-Mysuru Infrastructure Corridor Area Planning Authority
No. 5, Second Floor, Looplane, Race Course Road,
Bengaluru - 560 009
Tel : 080 22341230/35 E-mail: bmicapa@gmail.com

No: BMICAPA/CLU-04/98/2024-25/151 **Date: 28.04.2026**

PUBLICATION

(UNDER SEC 14(A) OF KTCP ACT, 1961)

Sri. K. Chandrashekar S/o Late K.S. Kunnegowda has applied to this Authority seeking change of land use from **"Agriculture"** Zone to **"Commercial"** purpose under Sec 14(A) of KTCP Act 1961, pertaining **Sy. No.628/1**, Extent 00Acre-20Guntas of Kesare Village, Kasaba Hobli, Mysore Taluk. Applicant has stated that the change of land use sought is in the interest of public by quoting the following;

1) By developing the Commercial Project in the above said land, the general public will get job opportunities.
2) During the development works of the layout there will be opportunity of employment for labourers.
3) Surrounding areas will be developed by developing the Commercial Project in the above said land.
4) By the development of commercial purpose, the Government will get the Tax in various forms.

Objections, if any, are invited from the public, any person may file his/her objection to Member Secretary, BMICAPA, Bengaluru in writing to the above address mentioned in this publication within 15 days from the publication of this notice. Any objections received after 15 days will not be considered.

Sd/- Member Secretary
B.M.I.C.A.P.A., Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/428/AKAR/2026-27

EMMVEE PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER LIMITED

(Formerly known as Emmvee Photovoltaic Power Private Limited)
Registered office: 13/1, International Airport Road, Bettahalasuru Post, Bettahalsur, Bangalore, Bangalore North, Karnataka, India, 562157,
Tel: +91 8022174328/33, **CIN:** L26101KA2007PLC042197

STATEMENT OF CONSOLIDATED AND STANDALONE AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2026

(All amounts are in INR lakhs, unless otherwise stated)

Sr. No.	Particulars	CONSOLIDATED					STANDALONE				
		Quarter ended			Year ended		Quarter ended			Year ended	
		March 31, 2026 (Audited)	December 31, 2025 (Unaudited)	March 31, 2025 (Refer note: 2)	March 31, 2026 (Audited)	March 31, 2025 (Audited)	March 31, 2026 (Audited)	December 31, 2025 (Unaudited)	March 31, 2025 (Refer note: 2)	March 31, 2026 (Audited)	March 31, 2025 (Audited)
1	Total income	1,74,383.77	1,16,794.32	1,07,492.60	5,10,339.25	2,36,032.55	32,056.96	11,452.55	55,142.93	1,18,752.77	1,79,256.65
2	Profit before tax	48,393.62	32,179.91	25,253.81	1,33,759.53	48,282.03	4,158.70	2,003.70	(313.01)	21,190.50	22,322.30
3	Profit after tax for the period/year	39,237.99	26,363.78	20,713.62	1,08,155.15	36,901.44	2,940.43	1,416.83	22.62	15,574.87	16,192.40
4	Total comprehensive income	39,564.95	26,267.74	20,655.86	1,07,823.16	36,803.62	2,940.40	1,429.13	(0.00)	15,565.81	16,132.80
5	Paid-up equity share capital (Face value of share INR 2/- each)	13,846.90	13,846.90	1,079.18	13,846.90	1,079.18	13,846.90	13,846.90	1,079.18	13,846.90	1,079.18
6	Other Equity				3,55,647.19	52,600.54				2,54,037.67	43,248.37
7	Earnings per share (Face value of share INR 2/- each) (Not annualised except for the year ended March 31, 2026 and March 31, 2025):										
	a) Basic (INR) (in absolute number)	5.67	4.11	3.49	17.17	6.22	0.42	0.22	0.00	2.47	2.73
	b) Diluted (INR) (in absolute number)	5.67	4.11	3.49	17.17	6.22	0.42	0.22	0.00	2.47	2.73

Notes:

1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly/Annual Financial Results are available on the websites of the Stock Exchange(s) and the listed entity at https://www.emmveepv.com/audited-financial-results-q4fy26.pdf.
2. The Company has completed its Initial Public Offering (IPO) comprising a fresh issuance of 9,87,95,483 equity shares with a face value of INR 2/- each and Offer for Sale of 3,48,45,069 equity shares of face value of INR 2/- each. These shares were offered at an issue price of INR 217/- per equity share. The Company raised a total of INR 2,90,000 Lakhs (including INR 2,14,386.20 Lakhs with respect to fresh issuance of equity shares) and the Company's equity shares were subsequently listed on the BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited with effect from November 18, 2025. Consequently, the requirement of submission of Consolidated and Standalone unaudited financial results is applicable on listing of equity shares of the Company from the quarter ended September 30, 2025, and accordingly the Company was not mandatorily required to prepare and publish quarterly results for the quarter ended March 31, 2025, in accordance with the Regulations.
3. The Board of Directors has recommended a final dividend of INR 1 per equity share of INR 2 each for the year ended March 31, 2026. The payment of the dividend will be upon approval by the members at the ensuing Annual General Meeting ("AGM").
4. Figures of previous periods /year have been regrouped, wherever necessary.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: April 28, 2026

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors of
Emmvee Photovoltaic Power Limited
(Formerly known as Emmvee Photovoltaic Power Private Limited)

Suhas Donthi Manjunatha
Whole time Director
DIN: 09671635

Adfactors 28/26

Tatya Tope's 1857 letter found in MP archives

Vinita.Chaturvedi
@timesofindia.com

Bhopal: A brittle sheet of paper discovered from the stacks of Madhya Pradesh's archives has revealed, despite the fading ink, the unmistakable signature of Tatya Tope, and the pulse of a rebellion before it found its roar.

Unearthed during the Centre's 'Gyan Bharat Mission' to digitise heritage records, the letter opens a rare window into the charged, clandestine months leading up to the 1857 war of Independence.

Dated 'Chaitra Badi 7, Samvat 1914' (1857 CE), the communication is addressed to subedars, sardars, sepoys and havaldars across princely states — its sweep suggesting a network already in motion, its tone hinting at strategy rather than spontaneity.

Archival records map Tatya Tope's circuit of mobilisation, persuasion and preparation

"This is not just a letter; it is a crucial historical link," said Madan Kumar Nagargoje, commissioner, directorate of archaeology, MP. "Tatya Tope's signature points out that this letter is rare and precious. It reflects minute planning and consultation before the revolt. This landmark discovery will lead to a better understanding of our history."

The letter's journey mirrors its message. Archival records trace Tatya Tope's movement across central India — Baitul, Gadakota, Gwalior, Jhansi and Shivpuri — mapping a restless circuit of mobilisation, persuasion and preparation.

The Directorate enlisted linguistic experts Syed Nayeemuddin and Amol Dnyaneshwar Mahalle to decode the text from Bundeli/Hindi rendered in Marathmoli script. It references a proposal from the Raja of Charkhari, and calls for collective deliberation.

Cancel enrolment of Rajiv's assassin as advocate: Cong MP

Chennai: Expressing shock over the enrolment of **A G Perarivalan**, a convict in the former PM Rajiv Gandhi's assassination case, in the Bar Council of TN and Puducherry, Congress MP R Sudha has written to President Droupadi Murmu seeking immediate cancellation of his enrolment as an advocate, **reports Venkadesan S.**

She has also demanded that the issue be taken up suo motu by the Madras high court, to be heard along with a similar pending case on enrolling people facing cases. Sudha said Section 24A of the Advocates Act, 1961, which bars enrolment of a convict as an advocate for two years, cannot be blindly relied on to allow persons like Perarivalan.

The Mayiladuthurai MP has also questioned the powers of the current office-bearers of Bar Council of TN and Puducherry to enrol advocates as election for the advocates' body has already been held.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that our client intends to transact with Gangaur Projects LLP, a firm incorporated under the provisions of Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008 and having its registered office at No 1034, 3rd Floor, Dr Rajkumar Road, Rajajinagar, 4th Block, Bengaluru – 560101, being the owner of the immovable property being residentially converted undeveloped land measuring 26 guntas (out of total extent of 3 acres 28 guntas) in Survey No 51/1 situated at Navaratna Agrahara Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore Urban District which is more fully described in the Schedule hereunder and hereinafter to as the **"Schedule Property"**.

Any person(s), entity, firm, institution (corporate or otherwise), banks or financial institutions having any claim(s), including any right, title, interest, entitlement, charge, demand whatsoever in respect of or against or to the Schedule Property or any part thereof and/or any of the title deeds or records in respect thereof by way of sale, transfer, assignment, allotment, exchange, right, interest, share, license, lease, sub-lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, mortgage, gift, lien, charge, encumbrance, occupation, covenant, trust, maintenance, easement, pre-emption, inheritance, bequest, succession, will, testamentary instrument, probate, letters of administration, possession, use, occupation, development rights/potential, agreement, litigation, lis-pendens, family arrangement, settlement, decree or order of any court of law or otherwise of whatsoever nature or otherwise howsoever **("Claim")**, is/are hereby required to make the same known, in writing, together with documentary proof in support thereof to the undersigned **within 15 (Fifteen) days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, it shall be presumed that no such Claim exists and if it existed, the claimant has relinquished such Claim and/or waived their right to exercise such Claim.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of residentially converted undeveloped land (converted vide Official Memorandum dated 24 May 2008 bearing No ALN (NA) (Jala) SR : 22/2007-08) measuring 26 guntas (out of total extent of 3 acres 28 guntas inclusive of 2 guntas kharabh) in Survey No 51/1 Navaratna Agrahara Village, Jala Hobli, Yelahanka Taluk, Bangalore Urban District bounded as below-

East : Remaining land in Survey No 51/1;
West : Survey No 63;
North : Remaining land in Survey No 51/1; and
South : Survey No 52.

Dated this 30th day of April 2026

Sudheer Madamaiah
Khaitan & Co LLP,
Indiqube Symphony, Tower II, 4th floor,
Mahatma Gandhi Road, Craig Park Layout,
Ashok Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka, 560001
T: +91 80 43397000

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following work

Publication of E-Tender Notice No.: B/TRD.2026-27/04 Dated : 22-04-2026

Item of work	Approx. Value
Provision of nylon mesh on TTC and portals for preventing bird nest in Bengaluru Division.	Rs. 53.36.100.00

Publication of E-Tender Notice No.: B/TRD.2026-27/05 Dated : 22-04-2026

Item of work	Approx. Value
[i] OHE modifications in connection with proposed capacity enhancement of SGT Wagon depot to meet demand of freight loading of 3000MT target by 2027. [ii] OHE modifications in connection with proposed construction of new IOH Shed for NMG Maintenance at SGT yard. [iii] Construction of new pitline in AC Loco Trip Shed at SGT-TRD works	Rs. 5,26,82,274.76

Publication of E-Tender Notice No.: B/TRD.2026-27/07 Dated : 22-04-2026

Item of work	Approx. Value
[i] OHE modifications in connection with replacing Low HT shelter of PF 7&8, provision of shelter in open area between second entry building and platform entrance including granite flooring [ii] OHE modifications in connection with Augmentation of AC Loco Trip Shed at Bengaluru. [iii] Provision of OHE for pit line no.1 at Bengaluru yard. [iv] Conversion of tramway OHE to conventional at Bengaluru yard [v] BIDOHE modifications in connection with provision of proposed Rd-06 (Spur Line of 686m) with shunting neck of 650m towards Bengaluru end duly dismantling existing Goods unloading platform adjacent to Rd-5 [vi] OHE modification in connection with proposed extension of PF-1 and PF-2 for a length of 150 mtrs and 5 mtr width at Krishnadevaraya station in Bengaluru - Yeliyur section [vii] OHE Modification of shifting Y TSS down line PTFE [viii] Bengaluru Division- OHE modifications in connection with construction of Foot Over Bridge (FOB) at Km. 55/200 at Chanapattna (CPT) yard near LC No.47 (Gangway:32mx3m, staircase:2x20m) for pedestrian movement (4T crossing)	Rs. 3,59,17,099.69

Last date for submission of bids for above Tenders is:Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 14-05-2026

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer / TRD Bengaluru
PUB/66/AAF/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the RailOne app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

Open Global E-Tender

No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 25/04/2026. The following e-Tenders can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in**. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply.** Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy.CMM/HQ/ CLW/ Chittaranjan, 9163340711 or AMM/HQ, 9163340713. **Office Address:** Office of The PCMM /CLW/Chittaranjan. **Sl. No.:[1]. Tender No.:73261020. Brief Description of Item:** Main Gear Bearing, Intermediate Gear Bearing and Pinion Bearing for Aluminium Gear Case of WAP-5 as per CLW's Drg. No. 1210-01.311-021, 1210-01.411-022, 1210-01.411-023. Each set contains 3 items in 24 Nos. **[Warranty Period:** 72 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity:79.00 Set. Earnest Money Deposit:** ₹ 200000.00 (INR)/0.00 (USD). **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST):26/05/2026 at 11:00 AM.**

PR8/336 PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan

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CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

OPEN E-Tender

No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 25/04/2026. The following E-Tenders can be accessed under the link www.ireps.gov.in. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply.** Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy. CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711 or AMM/HQ, 9163340713. Office Address: Office of The PCMM /CLW/Chittaranjan. **Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.:70250029A. Brief Description of Item:** Integrated Locomotive Kit For WAG-9H Class Of Freight Electric Locomotive As Per RDSO Spec No. RDSO/2017/EL/SPEC/0127, Rev.2. In addition to above description, the Integrated Locomotive Kit should also comply requirement mentioned in Schedule of requirement (SOR), copy attached with tender documents. Annual maintenance for 35 (thirty -five) years will be as per LTMA vide Doc. No. C-D&D/T/24/LTMA, REV.1 issued on 11/03/2026. **[Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity. 50.00 Set. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹5000000.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): 25/06/2026 at 11:00 AM**

PR7/335 PCCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan

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SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-(IREPS) Tender Notice No. 03 UBL 2026-27 Date : 24.04.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

Name of Work	Approx.Value
Hubballi Division: Hubballi - Improvements to old hospital old building at Gadag road, Hubballi (Balance work)	Rs.1,53,03,856.00/-

Last date for Submission of bids :
Upto 11.00 hrs on 18.05.2026

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Engineer/Co-Ordination/ Hubballi
PUB/75/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the **RailOne** app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice No.: Y/E.29/2026-27/11 Dated 23.04.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

Name of work	Approx.Value
(Re-tender)1) Enhancement of LHB/ICF coach maintenance facilities at Mysuru. 2) Ashokapuram-Construction of service rooms for C&W activities at Ashokapuram station-Electrical arrangements.	Rs. 14,47,966.78/-

E-Tender Notice No.: Y/E.29/2026-27/12 Dated 23.04.2026

Name of work	Approx.Value
(Re-tender) Extension of PF No.1 to 450 meters with High level platform, platform shelter and other amenity works at Masarahalli	Rs. 6,97,053/-

Last date for Submission of bids :
Upto 11:00 hrs on 14.05.2026

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, /General/Mysuru
PUB/76/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identification No. : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in (Contact 9646118773)

Tender Enquiry No.: QQ-4039/PO-T/26-27/CE-MM

Chief Purchase Officer/MM, Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL, 2nd Floor, Multi Storey Building, The Mall, PSPCL invites E-tender of **2000 No. Single Phase 16kVA & 2000 No. Single phase 25KVA,** EEL-1, ISI Marked, oil immersed, CRGO/Amorphous core, Aluminium wound, distribution transformers complete with fittings as per PSPCL specifications & conforming to IS 1180 Part-1 (2014) & IS 2026 (with latest amendments). For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 30.04.2026 onwards.**

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C-546/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2026-27/11027

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001.
Corporate Identity Number : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in (Contact No. 96461-23965)

Tender Enquiry No. - 02/GCD/PTA/TS/PSPCL/2026-27 Dated: 30.04.2026

Addl.SE Grid Construction Division PSPCL Patiala invites Open e-Tender for **"Outsourcing work of erection, testing and commissioning of 01 No. Additional 12.5 MVA Power TF (at 66 KV S/S Guara) and 01 No. Additional 20 MVA Power transformer (at 66 KV S/S Chananwal) along with complete bay equipment (under Annexure B) related works on partial turnkey mode under Grid Construction Division, Patiala".** For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 30.04.2026 (09:00 AM onwards).

Note: Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C-545/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2026-27/11026

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number : U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in (Contact No. 96461-23210, 96461-40141)

Tender Enquiry No. (RfS No.) 62/PSPCL/NRSE/SOLAR/250MW/2026/ET-12 Dated: 28-04-2026

Office of Dy.CE/NRSE, NRSE & Thermal (D), T-8, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala-147001, invites bids for purchase of 250 MW solar power through competitive bidding process (followed by e-reverse auction) from grid connected solar photovoltaic power projects to be set up anywhere in Punjab. For detailed NIT and tender specification please refer to **https://www.bharat-electronictender.com**

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at **https://www.bharat-electronictender.com** only.

C-541/26, DPR/Pb.:1079/12/2026-27/11021

Hon. Balasaheb Thackeray Agribusiness and Rural Transformation (SMART) Project

(A Govt. of Maharashtra. World Bank assisted Project)
PIU, M.S.W.C. SMART Project
583/B, Market Yard, Gultekadi, Pune 411 037 (Maharashtra)
Phone:020-24206849/651, Web site: www.mswarehousing.com

Tender Notice

The Project Implementation Unit-MSWC of SMART Project invites online bid (B 2 - Item rate) on **https://mahatenders.gov.in** for below mentioned works.

Sr No	Tender Name	RFB No	Tender Cost (without GST)
1	Construction of 3 x 5040 MT capacity Pre-Engineered Warehouse Building, Compound wall, Internal road, Office building & Training center, Cleaning & Grading Yard, Drying Yard, Hamal Shed, Pump House and ancillary works for Agro Logistic hub at Irala, Tal- Malegaon, Dist. Washim, Maharashtra	IN-PCMU-SMART-545152-CW-RFB	Rs. 1825.69 Lakhs
2	Construction of 2x5040 MT Capacity Pre-Engineered Warehouse Building, Internal Road, Office Building & Training center, Cleaning & Grading Yard, Drying Yard, Hamal Shed and ancillary works for Agro Logistic Hub at Shah, Tal -Karanja Lad,Dist. Washim, Maharashtra	IN-PCMU-SMART-533196-CW- RFB	Rs.1241.26 Lakhs

The Request for Bid document is also available on the project website www.smart-mh.org. The date for submission of online bids is **30/04/2026 to 29/05/2026 up to 5.00 PM.** Agencies are requested to register themselves for E-tenders online, Bidding documents can be seen and downloaded from the website http://mahatenders.gov.in **under Co-operation, Marketing & Textiles Dept, Mumbai.** The bid should be submitted in electronic format on the website "http://mahatenders.gov.in".
Right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason is reserved.

DGIPR 2026-27/494

Head PIU-MSWC, SMART Project. & Chairman & Managing Director

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD

INVITATION FOR TENDER (Through KPP Portal Only) (2nd Call)

BWSSB invite tenders in Two Stage Tender System from Eligible Contractors for the below mentioned works.

Office of The Chief Engineer (Used Water Projects), 5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bangalore-09.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to Tender / EMD
	No: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/DCE(UWP)/TA/176/2026-27	**Date: 28.04.2026**
1	Providing and laying 1100mm dia DI rising main inside storm water drain opposite from Royal Orchid Hotel to KGA Road, Domluru. (Additional Length)	**Rs. 358.09 Lakhs** / **Rs. 5.37 Lakhs**
	No: BWSSB/CE(UWP)/DCE(UWP)/TA/174/2026-27	**Date: 28.04.2026**
2	Providing and laying 1100mm dia DI rising main from ISPS Domluru flyover towards Diamond District Apartment, Old Airport Road, Domluru. (Additional Length)	**Rs. 358.30 Lakhs** / **Rs. 5.37 Lakhs**

For the above work Last date and time for Receipt of tenders will be on **15.05.2026 upto 16.00 hrs**. The technical bids will be opened on: **16.05.2026 at 17.00 hrs**.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (UWP)

The detail regarding the tender & participation in the e-procurement portal process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the below signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/426/Zen/2026-27

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 & 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru - 560009. Phone No. 080-22265383 website:www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-09/315/2026-27 **Date:29.04.2026**

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK KPP Portal Only)

Item Rate Tender under two cover bid system is invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the work mentioned below:

Name of the work: Improvement to Industrial Layout including Reconstruction and resurfacing of 12m & 18m wide roads including flexible pavement, construction of RCC Side Drains, RCC Cross Drainage and Maintenance of Existing drain works in Bommasandra 1st, 2nd & 3rd Phase Industrial Area, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru Urban District.

- Last Date & Time for Receipt of Tenders: **15.05.2026** upto **4:00** pm.

Applicants May download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Chief Engineer-1
KIADB, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/429/CCL/2026-27

34001/102/2627

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B) NIRMAN SOUDHA BHUBANESWAR

E-mail - seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com
Bid Identification No.S.E.E.C (R&B) 04/2026-27
No. 1745 / Date 21.04.2026

The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I. works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in : **https://tendersorissa.gov.in.** The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from dt.02.05.2026 at 05.00 P.M. to dt.18.05.2026 up to 05.00 P.M. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened dt.19.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.**

Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, BBSR

OIPR-34001/34006/1/26-27/0004

25001/66/2627

By E_Mail/e-Despatch
E_Mail ID: serwcbaripada@gmail.com
Ph-No-06792-261343/261344
Gangraj, Baripada

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BARIPADA

Office Order No. 2434 / Dt. 28.04.2026
1st Corrigendum to National Competitive Bidding e_procurement Notice No. 2143/Bridge works Dt. 30.03.2026 (NCB No-409)

Due to unavoidable circumstances the important dates of tendering process for bridge works annexure Sl No-1, Sl No-2 and Sl No-3 are being changed as follows.

Sl No	Item	Time Schedule as per Original NCB	Time Schedule as per Corrigendum Notice
1	Availability of tender On-line for bidding	15.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M to 29.04.2026 upto 05.00 P.M	11.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M to 26.05.2026 upto 05.00 P.M
2	Date & Time of Seeking Tender Clarification if any	28.04.2026 upto 05.00 P.M	25.05.2026 upto 05.00 P.M
3	Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bid	30.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M	28.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M
4	Date & Time of Opening of Financial Bid	Will be intimated later	Will be intimated later

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Sd/- **Er. A.K Naik**
Chief Construction Engineer
R.W. CIRCLE, BARIPADA

OIPR - 25001/25130/1/26-27/0005

30001/13/2627

ODISHA MINING CORPORATION LIMITED

OMC House, Bhubaneswar-751001, Odisha
CIN: U13100OR1956SGC000313, www.omcltd.in

OMC ODISHA MINING CORPORATION LTD. Mining Happiness

Short Notice

(For Sale of unsold ore lying in Koira Mining Circle)

The Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd. intends to sell the unsold ore produced by ex-lessees for Raikela Iron Ore Mines of Sri Prabodh Mohanty under Koira Mining Circle through National e-auction which will be conducted by MSTC Ltd. The e-auction shall be held from 11.00 AM to 2.00 PM on dt. 05.05.2026.

For details, please visit the website of MSTC i.e **www.mstcecommerce.com**

Chief General Manager (S&M)

OIPR-30001/30005/1/26-27/0013

25001/65/2627

ମୁଖ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ
ଗ୍ରାମ୍ୟ ନିର୍ମାଣ ମଣ୍ଡଳ, ବ୍ରହ୍ମପୁର

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR

(At/Po- Ambapua, Near Income Tax office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)

(E-Mail :- serwbpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel No. :- 0680-2404287)

E-Mail / E-despatch

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. Online Tender/02-2026-27/BPR

Identification No	Name of work	No. of Works	Approx. Estimated Cost (In lakh)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
Online Tender / 02-2026-27/BPR	**Road Works under Mukya Mantri Sadak Yojana (MMSY)**	16 Nos	From Rs. 108.80 Lakhs to Rs. 982.22 Lakhs	"B" Class "A" Class or "Special" Class as applicable	Period of Completion as provided as per Col. No. 5 of Annexure of NIT

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender online for bidding	
		From	To
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Berhampur	Online Tender/02-2026-27/BPR	15.05.2026 at 10.00 A.M.	29.05.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.

(i) EMD / Bid Security, Cost of Bid document is to be transferred through Online as per the procedure mentioned in the DTCN.
(ii) Non-submission of the information/documents through online by the bidder as per the items mentioned in the eligible criteria of the DTCN will also liable for rejection of his tender.

Further details & Corrigendum if any can be seen from the website: - www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/-
Chief Engineer
R. W. Circle, Berhampur

OIPR-25001/25071/1/26-27/0003

25001/62/2627

eMail: se_nerwkjr@rediffmail.com

GOVT. OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE : KEONJHAR

eProcurement Notice for Bridge Works under SBY
Bid Identification No. NCB-03 / RWCKJR / 2026-27

No. 2351 / Date: 24.04.26

1. Name of the work : **Construction of 08 no. bridges under SBY in the District of Keonjhar.**
2. No. of work : **08** (Eight) Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure in NIT.
4. Class of Contractor (Eligible) : As per Annexure in NIT.
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure in NIT.
6. Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/O C.C.E.R.W. Circle, Keonjhar	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar	NCB-03/ RWCKJR/ 2026-27	Dt.07.05.26 At 11.00 A.M.	Dt.21.05.26 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.20.05.26 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.22.05.26 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

- **Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
R.W. Circle, Keonjhar.

OIPR-25001/25177/1/26-27/0004

34001/137/2627

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B) NIRMAN SOUDHA BHUBANESWAR

E-mail: seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. S.E.E.C (R&B) 06/2026-27
No. 1836 /Date: 28.04.2026

The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I. works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in: **https://tendersorissa.gov.in.** The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from dt.02.05.2026 at 05.00 P.M. to dt.18.05.2026 up to 05.00 P.M. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened dt.19.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.**

Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, BBSR

OIPR-34001/34006/1/26-27/0006

25001/68/2627

E-Mail - sencrwangul@yahoo.co.in
Ph: 06764 - 236404

Government of Odisha Office of the Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Angul

TENDER CALL NOTICE FOR BRIDGE WORKS IN ODISHA
Bid Identification No. Bridge Online AGL- 01/2026-27

No. 1341 // Dt.23.04.2026

1. Name of the work : Bridge works
2. Total No. of work : 04 Nos.
3. Estimated cost : Rs.338.28 Lakhs to Rs.689.76 Lakhs(Approx.)
4. Class of Contractor : As per Annexure
5. Period of completion : As per Annexure
6. Other details.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Angul	Bridge Online-AGL-01/ 2026-27	05.05.2026 at 9.00 A.M	19.05.2026 up to 5.00 P.M	15.05.2026 upto 1.00 P.M	20.05.2026 at 9.00 A.M	Will be intimated separately

(1) For detailed Notice inviting Tenders, Please visit to the website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in**

Sd/- **Chief Construction Engineer**
Rural Works Circle, Angul

OIPR-25001/25180/1/26-27/0001

INFRASTRUCTURE LEAP

UTTARAKHAND'S NEW ERA OF CONNECTIVITY

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF PM NARENDRA MODI AND THE LEADERSHIP OF UTTARAKHAND CM PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI, UTTARAKHAND IS WITNESSING A NEW ERA OF CONNECTIVITY. EXPANDING ROAD, RAIL AND AIR NETWORKS ARE REINFORCING THE STATE'S VISION OF SEAMLESS MOBILITY AND GROWTH ACROSS SECTORS

"Uttarakhand's development has gained momentum with the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor. PM's visits—from Mana village and Adi-Kailash to the Investor Summit, National Games and Harshil-Mukhba—have boosted the state's identity and tourism, with growing footfall at places visited by him. The state government is pursuing all-round development aligned with the "Vikas Bhi aur Virasat Bhi" (development along with heritage) vision to make Uttarakhand the best state in the country."

-Pushkar Singh Dhami, Chief Minister

"Uttarakhand state, along with completing 25 years of its establishment, has entered its twenty-sixth year. With the inauguration of the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, another big achievement has been added to this progress. I am very happy that due to the policies of the double-engine government and the hard work of the people of Uttarakhand, this young state is adding new dimensions of development. This project will also give new momentum to the development of Uttarakhand. A very large part of this expressway passes through UP. I give many, many congratulations to the whole country for this project."

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

PICS: DIPR, UTTARAKHAND GOVERNMENT

PM Narendra Modi and Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami greeting the public

DELHI–DEHRADUN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

One of the flagship achievements of the current government has been the inauguration of the Delhi–Dehradun Economic Corridor, a world-class expressway that dramatically improves connectivity between the national capital and Uttarakhand's capital. This state-of-the-art infrastructure project significantly cuts travel time—reducing journeys that once took over six hours to approximately two-and-a-half hours.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at the expressway's launch, highlighted its multi-dimensional impact: lower travel costs, reduced fuel consumption, increased freight efficiency and expanded employment opportunities for local communities. The enhanced link is already stimulating tourism growth in hubs such as Dehradun, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Mussoorie and the sacred Char Dham circuit, bringing more visitors and economic activity to the region.

DELHI-DEHRADUN EXPRESSWAY PROJECT

ROB: 2, Bridges: 10
Asia's longest elevated wildlife corridor: 12-km
Toll Tax: Rs 675 one way, Rs 1,000 for same day return; 51-km greenfield road worth Rs 2,095 crore to connect route with Haridwar

ALL-WEATHER ROADS

A foundational pillar of Uttarakhand's development agenda has been the expansion and upgrading of all-weather roads, especially in rural and mountainous regions. The state's recent infrastructure master plan allocates over ₹74,100 crore to enhance connectivity across districts, converting thousands of kilometres of unpaved roads into durable, climate-resilient highways that withstand monsoon challenges and improve access to essential services.

Significant budgetary allocations in the 2026 state budget further underscore this commitment, with funds dedicated to rural road construction under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and other schemes. Efforts to bring last-mile connectivity to remote hill villages are broadening economic opportunities for residents and integrating previously isolated communities into the state's growth narrative.

STRATEGIC HIGHWAYS AND REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Beyond the Delhi–Dehradun Highway, the Dhami government has prioritised critical regional routes, including the Dehradun–Khatima Highway corridor and urban bypass projects that alleviate congestion and streamline movement within and across districts. In Khatima, modern transport infrastructure—including a high-tech bus station—has enhanced accessibility and is set to stimulate local commerce and tourism.

Additionally, projects such as the widening and upgrading of key roads in Udham Singh Nagar and Sahaspur reflect a broader strategy to knit together urban, peri-urban and rural economies. These investments not only ease local commutes but also reduce the cost of transporting goods, thereby supporting small businesses, farmers and industrial activity.

TIMELINE OF DELHI-DEHRADUN EXPRESSWAY PROJECT

2020:	Rs 11,963 crore project approved
2021:	Tender approved, land acquired, foundation stone laid
2022:	Elevated corridor work started from Asharodi to Ganeshpur
2024:	Structure and connectivity work gains pace
2025:	Elevated corridor work almost completed, other works on 90% route completed
2026:	Project complete, inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi

Key highlights

Project cost: Rs 11,963 crore
Length: 213-km
Vehicular underpass: 113
Bus Shelters: 62
Service road: 76-km
Entry points: 16
Elephant underpass: 2
Animal underpass: 6
Wayside amenities: 12

DELHI-DEHRADUN EXPRESSWAY PROJECT

New Route	Old route
1. Akshardham, Delhi	1. Delhi
2. Ghaziabad	2. Ghaziabad
3. Baghpat	3. Meerut
4. Shamli	4. Muzaffarnagar
5. Saharanpur	5. Roorkee
6. Asharodi, Dehradun	6. Dehradun

The Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, Asia's longest elevated wildlife corridor, is significantly reducing travel time and travel costs

Ropeway projects gain momentum

Uttarakhand sees fast progress in ropeway projects. Read on...

PICS: SUKANTA MUKHERJEE

Two of the most ambitious ropeway projects in the state are the Govindghat–Hemkund Sahib Ropeway and the Sonprayag–Kedarnath Ropeway, developed under the National Ropeways Development Programme – Parvatmala Pariyojana.

The Hemkund Sahib Ropeway will span about 12.4 km, replacing the arduous 21-km trek from Govindghat to the sacred Gurudwara with a modern aerial link that offers all-weather connectivity. Designed with advanced gondola technology and capable of transporting up to 11,000 visitors daily, this ropeway promises to support both pilgrimage and tourism year-round.

Similarly, the Kedarnath Ropeway—a 12.9 km aerial corridor—will drastically reduce travel time for devotees and travellers, cutting what used to be an 8–9-hour uphill journey down to mere minutes. With the use of cutting-edge tri-cable detachable gondola (3S) technology, it will accommodate thousands of passengers per hour in each direction, greatly easing access to one of Hinduism's most revered Char Dham sites.

A seaplane successfully carried out a trial landing at the Ganga Barrage in Rishikesh, marking a key step towards boosting air connectivity and tourism in Uttarakhand

ALPINE RIDES FOR HILL LEISURE

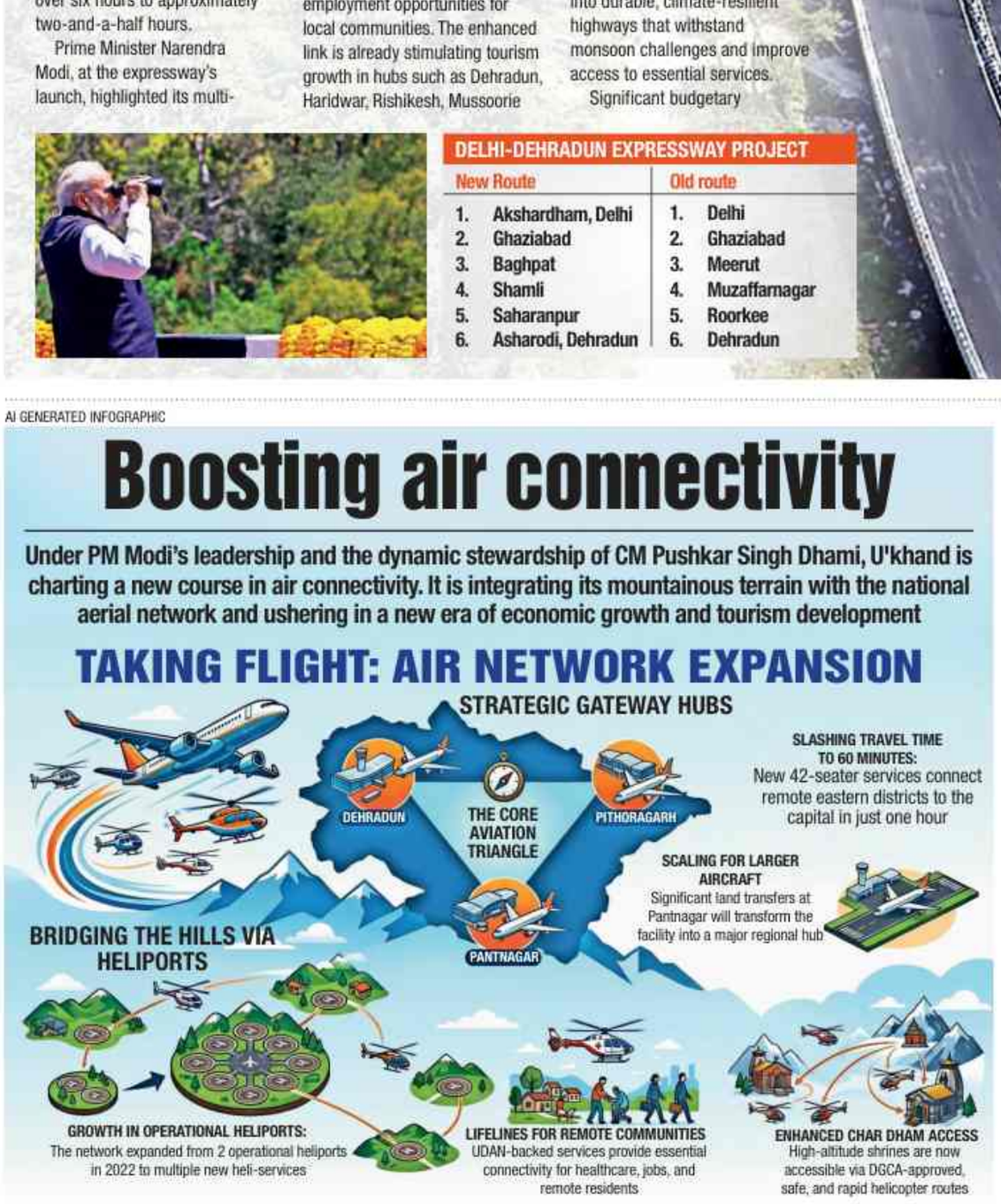
- The Mussoorie–Bhatta Falls ropeway is among the region's notable attractions, offering aerial views of waterfalls and surrounding ridgelines.
- Surkanda Devi temple, dedicated to Goddess Durga, earlier required a demanding uphill trek for devotees. The ropeway now enables easier pilgrim movement while also offering sweeping views of the Himalayan landscape.

Haridwar ropeway

AI GENERATED INFOGRAPHIC

Boosting air connectivity

Under PM Modi's leadership and the dynamic stewardship of CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, U'khand is charting a new course in air connectivity. It is integrating its mountainous terrain with the national aerial network and ushering in a new era of economic growth and tourism development



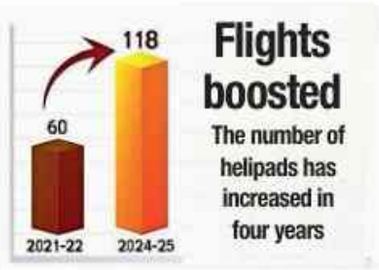
At the heart of Uttarakhand's air connectivity drive are its three key airports: Dehradun's Jolly Grant, Pantnagar and Pithoragarh. Under the double-engine government's development push, all three have seen expanded facilities and increased operations, ensuring more flights, destinations and travellers can be accommodated with ease.

In a landmark development, CM Dhami recently inaugurated a 42-seater air service between Pithoragarh and Dehradun, slashing travel time between the remote eastern districts and the state capital to a mere hour. This initiative not only enhances accessibility for residents in Pithoragarh, Champawat and Bageshwar districts, but also supports tourism, healthcare access and economic exchanges across the state.

MAKING HILLS ACCESSIBLE

Recognising that conventional runways cannot reach every Himalayan nook, the Dhami government has aggressively expanded helicopter connectivity through the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme and its own air connectivity initiatives. Over the past few years, the state has moved from having just two heliports in 2022 to multiple new heli-services today, with more under development across hill districts. These aerial nodes now serve Gauchar, Almora, Pithoragarh, Srinagar, Sahastradhara and more, transforming how people and pilgrims move across challenging terrain.

Helicopter services inaugurated under the state's scheme connect Dehradun with Joshiyara (Uttarkashi), Gauchar (Chamoli) and even offer direct links from the national capital to Pithoragarh. These links are the lifelines for remote communities, reducing arduous journeys of many hours to swift aerial hops while bolstering regional tourism and job creation.



Flights boosted
The number of helipads has increased in four years

PILGRIMAGE AND TOURISM ENHANCED BY AIR ROUTES

The importance of aerial mobility is especially pronounced during the Char Dham Yatra season, when helicopter services provide pilgrims with safe, rapid access to high-altitude shrines. Aviation-enabled tourism has also become a magnet for adventure seekers and sightseers alike. Services connecting valleys and hill towns mean that travellers can explore a broader range of destinations without enduring long, taxing road journeys. From picturesque hill districts to cultural and spiritual hotspots, state's air connectivity is unlocking new experiences for visitors from across India and beyond.

Tracks to transformation

Aligned with PM Modi's vision and guided by CM Pushkar Singh Dhami, Uttarakhand's rail infrastructure is witnessing a transformation, redefining connectivity, strengthening economic prospects, & creating new opportunities for tourism and pilgrimage

- ✔ Major projects are integrating the state more closely with India's national railway grid.
- ✔ The flagship Rishikesh–Karnaprayag rail line spans around 125 km through challenging Himalayan terrain. The project aims to improve access to hill districts and major religious and tourist destinations.
- ✔ Nearly 85% of the route passes through tunnels and deep valleys, showcasing advanced engineering. Its longest tunnel, over 14 km, is India's longest railway tunnel. A majority of physical work has been completed.
- ✔ The corridor is expected to be completed by 2028, offering reliable all-weather connectivity.
- ✔ Future proposals such as the Karnaprayag–Bageshwar link could further connect Garhwal and Kumaon
- ✔ Uttarakhand's first Vande Bharat Express between Dehradun and Delhi has improved fast, modern travel. The Dehradun–Lucknow Vande Bharat strengthens links with Uttar Pradesh and key cities en route.
- ✔ The Deoband–Roorkee rail section shortens the Delhi–Dehradun route by around 40 km.
- ✔ Station upgrades under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme are improving passenger comfort and amenities.

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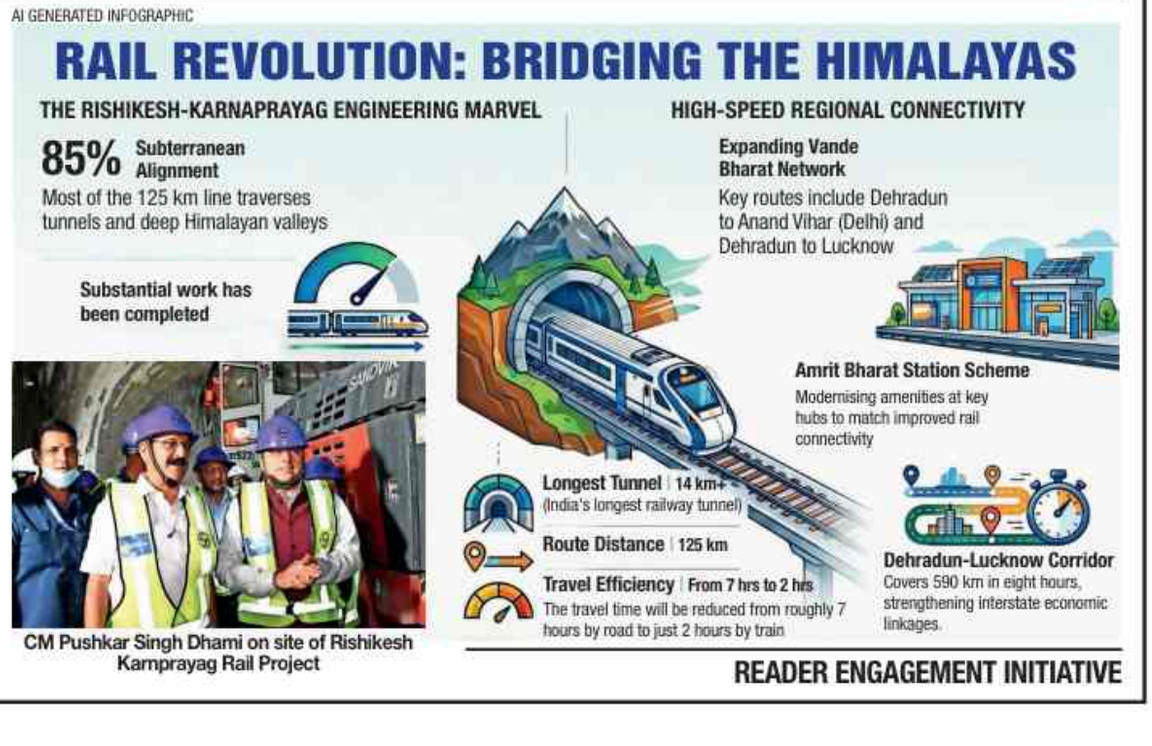


CM Pushkar Singh Dhami on site of Rishikesh Karnprayag Rail Project

A thought for today

Stone Age didn't end because world ran out of stones. Oil Age won't end because world runs out of oil

SHEIKH YAMANI, former Saudi oil minister

Cartel Blanche

UAE's exit from Opec dents world's biggest cartel. Govts should use every tool to smash smaller ones

UAE's decision to quit Opec may have come as a surprise, but it's a good thing. For, Opec is nothing but a cartel, and cartels take a toll on customers. They're everything free markets ought not to be – a tacit agreement to not compete. Yet, it is a sad truth that they hide in plain sight even in so-called market economies. EU, which is vocal about free trade, has fined auto component suppliers billions of dollars for collusion. Year after year, it's found prices of parts ranging from spark plugs to headlights, airbags, and even the foam used in seats, fixed. In Britain – Adam Smith's home – 50 leading schools, including Eton, Harrow, Westminster, were found colluding on fee revisions. Even Apple was caught rigging ebook prices in 2013. It got publishers to pull ebooks from Amazon's Kindle store, and sell them at higher rates on its own store.

Unlike those cartels, Opec's actions have touched everyone everywhere. Because nobody is immune to the prices of diesel, plastic, fertiliser and textiles. John Asker, who teaches economics at UCLA, has estimated that Opec's actions cost the world $5.7tn between 1970 and 2014. Considering that a 3% loss of GDP typically results in recession, he estimates that Opec had inflicted the equivalent of a 2.5-year recession on the world by 2014.

Of course, UAE's exit isn't a matter of high principle. It's leaving Opec to increase production and revenues, without being hobbled by the group's quotas. Every oil producer knows that electrification and decarbonisation are inevitable. China's rapid electrification, for example, has already reduced its hydrocarbon demand by 1mn bpd. So, for oil and gas producers, now's the time to sell as much as they can. UAE's current production capacity is 4.8mn barrels per day, and it wants to sell 5mn bpd by 2027. But Opec allows it to sell only 3.4mn bpd. Hence, the break.

Opec has already lost much of its clout, and aggressive production by US, UAE, etc, will be good for the world economy. If crude tumbles towards $50, as was expected before US and Israel attacked Iran, inflation will slow down, and growth inch up. If cracks in one cartel can do that, imagine the good broader decartelisation would do. From phone tariffs to plane tickets, house prices to school fees, every rupee saved is greater purchasing power in the customer's hand. Your hand.

Held Together By Haha

Charles is wooing Trump with humour, because punchlines really can pick up a lot of social slack

Charles arrived in America, on a mission to repair his island nation's relationship with King D, somewhat inauspiciously. A man with a gun had gotten close enough to Donald, to raise fears of a JFK fate. But Old Bean has carried with him nicely crafted speeches, punctuated by some Dickens and some Oscar Wilde. So, he didn't just make the US Congress laugh. He made *divided* Congress laugh *together* – this is roughly equivalent to getting cats and dogs to share a water bowl. Alternatively, the whole thing evoked A Tale of Two Charleses: One made a fortune describing the interior of workhouses, the other inherited a fortune ensuring he never has to see the interior of a kitchen. Overall takeaway is that a walking punchline can still land a big laugh.

It's especially engaging to watch a man who's a joke, laugh at himself. On this front, Brits are really great. As their empire shrinks to a pond, they can still put the kettle on, and jest about having reached the age where their back goes out more than they do. A worldly upside to self-deprecating humour is that it's very hard to loathe a man who just made you snort.

As for us Indians, our relationship with humour is like our traffic – chaotic, occasionally dangerous, but mostly reaching the destination in one piece. What's special is that we are simultaneously one of the most hierarchical societies on earth, and one of the most irreverent. We touch elders' feet, and do devastating impressions of them the moment they leave the room. We address bosses as "sir" with the gravity of a Supreme Court petition, then spend the shared auto ride home doing a full character breakdown of everything wrong with them. But people who forward savage WhatsApp jokes at midnight, can still file hurt-sentiment cases by morning. For them, being confident in your 'culture' means an FIR about a stand-up set.

Mango terrorism

Confessions of a non-'aam aurat'

Bachi Karkaria

'Summer-time and the livin' ain't easy./Summer-time and the mangoes are high.' That's my version of the Ella-Louis classic. April-May is hell in Mumbai if you don't belong to majoritarian *Aam-mangta* party. A one-upmanship prevails: who savoured the season's first Devgadh Alphonso, at the most staggering prices? In my nightmares, I'm drowning in an ocean of *aam-ras*. Disclaimer: in a nation of mango-eaters, I'm not a mango-hater. I don't dismiss the entire genus of *Mangifera indica* as mangy plus feral. It's only the total domination of Don Alphonso that I detest. Truth is, it disagrees with me – as much as my Gujarati-speaking *bhaiyo aney behno* simply cannot digest such unthinkable heresy.

Forget what Congress president called PM-ji. For me, 'hapoos' ranks with Hamas, Hezbollah and Hizbul Mujahideen, with LeT, JeM, and every UN-listed and Trump-designated terror outfit. The city may give it a salivating 'Tali', I want a 'ban'. Here's why.

erratica

Our weekly fruit app has gone monotheist, monopolistic, monotonous. Instead of the usual alphabet starting with apple, banana, chikoo, dragon fruit…the only variety on offer is Super Jumbo, Jumbo, Large, Small, Baby of Devgadh Alphonso. No more savouring *bombil fry, surmai-masala, and kekda-curry*; home-chef Pratibha's supply has switched to this gem from her family's Ratnagiri *ambyachi baug*. Nor is the fall restricted to *phal*. Modest carts normally ferrying *aloo-pyaz-tamatar*-trundle past laden only with youknowhat; cheaper qualities for *aam janata*. Not just fruit and veg have gone *ha-phooossss*. Instead of baba-suits and frocks, small-shop awnings are festooned with the familiar cartons.

Surely-*ji*, some anti-conversion law should apply?!

It would be okay if the season's Supreme Leader allowed diversity. But, no, it won't rule and let drool – even over fellow breeds. Own sister Bulsar *hapoos* is told, 'Eat your *gutli* out.' First cousin *payri* pines for attention. Cowering in corners are buxom-as-a-*macchhiwali* Rajapuri or Badami, thin-skinned as a *neta*. Shamed *Lalbagh* blushes.

Would this swaggering, globally demanded, locally coveted, golden-skinned girl pleeease stop pulping all the rest. *Yeh dil maango* more varieties.

***

Alec Smart said, "Better to fire than fire at. More legal, less messy."

Message Beyond Elections

Kerala & TN, to Assam & Bengal, each of the four big states where voting has concluded is a perfect example – via language, culture, politics – of India's innate ability to live with differences

Uday Chandra

Amusingly, electoral outcomes in eastern and southern states are far less surprising to those who live in them, than to those who interpret them, from Delhi. The ongoing contests in Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Kerala underscore an uncomfortable truth: a wide chasm persists between how India's politics and history are presented in textbooks, and how they are lived and narrated, in the east and south. The upshot is, a systematic failure, to grasp the appeal of social democracy grounded in distinctive vernacular forms of modernity.

Take West Bengal. The everyday idioms of politics, visible in street theatre, poetry, song and govt circulars alike, are distinctly Bengali. Political authority is performed through cultural fluency, as much as grassroots organisation. Muslims, Christians and Hindus quote Tagore, Nazrul or Michael Madhusudan, with roughly equal fervour. Welfare is not merely delivered, but narrated, debated, and judged in Bengali.

Political speech straddles the apparently unbridgeable divide between 'folk' and 'classical', puzzling those who struggle to grasp cadences of this lingua franca spoken from the Himalayan foothills to the Gangetic delta. Even as Santhali, Nepali, Odia, Urdu and Bhojpuri flourish in their own right as sister languages, those whom the English once dubbed "upcountrymen", are now recast as *bohiragoto* (outsiders). Yet, Shah Rukh Khan is embraced today, as lovingly as the kabuliwalla, in Tagore's story.

Next, consider Tamil Nadu. The century-old Dravidian movement has crafted arguably India's most self-conscious vernacular public sphere. Political speeches, cinematic dialogues, legislative debates, and welfare rhetoric circulate with remarkable coherence between spoken and written Tamil. Similarly, leaders such as CN Annadurai or Karunanidhi moved effortlessly between Sangam classicism and street-corner repartee.

Tamil social democracy, which encompasses midday meals, canteens and libraries, as well as caste-based reservations, is neither an abstract, nor an imported ideology. Its vernacular common sense is lived, articulated, and defended, across caste and class divides, in Tamil.

It is true English circulates among urban professional classes and Hindi is spoken by the growing north Indian migrant population in this highly industrialised state. Yet, it is Tamil that anchors political legitimacy in ways that flummox non-Tamil speakers. 'Identity politics' simply fails to see how language becomes durable, social infra.

Similarly, Kerala's social democracy is often reduced to cliches about high literacy and communist ideology. What goes unnoticed is that this literacy is overwhelmingly in Malayalam, producing an electorate that consumes politics as text, not spectacle. Newspapers, political pamphlets, and trade union literature circulate, within a dense Malayalam public sphere in which politics is argued over, endlessly, at toddy shops, reading rooms and party meetings.

Malayalis do not rely on 'national' news anchors to make sense of budgets, policies and manifestos. Their legendary scepticism, hostile to rhetorical excess, is thoroughly homegrown, yet, deeply cosmopolitan. When votes flip between CPM and Congress, every five years, they strengthen a shared vernacular grammar of social democracy.

Image: AI

This embedded political literacy is shaped as much by internal debates, as by Kerala's long engagement with the wider world – from the rest of the Indian subcontinent to Arabian Sea littorals. And remains largely unintelligible to those who insist on reading it from afar.

Finally, in Assam, the language of social democracy gives way to a more anxious vernacular politics of who belongs and who is entitled to welfare. Idioms of Axomiya politics hinge on indigeneity, mobility and belonging. Each of these abstract nouns fails to capture the textures of land, language and memory that come alive in the songs of Bhupen Hazarika or Zubeen Garg.

Axomiyas readily lapse into Bengali, Hindi or English, and ethnic minorities dot the bazaars, villages and campuses of Assam. Yet, Assamese is much more than a medium of communication. It is a sharply drawn line that separates the insider from the shadowy *bohiragoto* (outsider).

If the Assam Accords sought to domesticate subnationalism, as ethnoregionalism, National Register of Citizens threatened to remake India's citizenship laws. 'Region' and 'nation' thus exist in a tight, yet uneasy, embrace. Neither 'secularism' nor 'communalism' can explain why nine-tenths of excluded persons in NRC were Hindu, or why BJP state govt acts as a patron of Assamese Muslims. To read Assam, as just another theatre for national politics, would be profoundly wrongheaded.

Irrespective of who wins or loses, this past month of jockeying for power and patronage taught us two big lessons. First, India's 'nation' is a crowded argument among many. In Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam, as political theorist Partha Chatterjee argues in a new book, India is continually re-imagined through languages that carry their own histories, publics, and political common sense.

These regions don't passively receive a singular national narrative from New Delhi. Instead, they interpret it, argue with it, and, when necessary, refuse it. One language, creed or election is much too simplistic to accommodate this heterogeneity. Indeed, India's federal unity endures by negotiating the many vernacular ways of 'being' – that make us Indian.

Second, the states that went to polls demonstrate the *varieties* of social democracy around the country. To be Indian is, above all, to possess a capacity to move across states linguistically, culturally, and politically, without fear. Plural notions of belonging define a civilisational outlook. This is why Gandhi and Tagore warned of the narrow walls and inward-looking outlook that defined European nationhood.

The world may look to India as a test case for living with difference – but this is integral to India's federal social democracy, capacious enough to let us belong in more than one place, and in more than one language.

The writer is a political analyst

For India To Be Strong, Indians Must Kindly Adjust

Country needs time to build up domestic capacities, till then reduce dependence on those 'perfect' imports

Somnath Mukherjee

For the first time since 1945, the world seems caught up in whirlpools of hot geopolitical contests. Instead of the neat cleavage (between Allies and Axis powers) in 1945, there are echoes of 1914, when disparate political disputes got triggered when Archduke Franz Ferdinand fell to Gavrilo Princip's bullets at Sarajevo.

On one hand, Russia and Europe are circling each other in a replay of historical mistrust and hostility, especially over Ukraine. On the other, the Iran war has completed the circle of unintended consequences (of US actions), that started with Gulf War 2. US overthrow of Saddam meant Iran got a foothold in Iraq. After the inevitable US exit in 2011, Iran created a crescent of Shia influence (Lebanon-Syria-Iraq-Iran) from Mediterranean to Arabian sea.

To hedge, Iran also created strong presence in the west, via Houthi partisans in Yemen. This geographic chessboard means Iran sits astride two of the most critical trading chokepoints of the world – Strait of Hormuz in the east and Bab-el-Mandeb in the west.

The war today has also resurrected a West Asian 'Clash of Civilisations' in its wake. Economics, religion, and strategic interests have sharpened the cleavage. This is exemplified by Iran targeting UAE more than Israel in the war!

On a third leg, China watches on with ill-disguised glee. It's supplying military-economic materiel to all sides hurting US – Russia, Iran, and North Korea – while not getting overtly involved in any conflict. At the same time, it keeps piling on pressures on its own chokepoints, like Taiwan. Note, Taiwan's opposition leader recently made a "I come in peace" visit to China.

In a world where major powers are caught up in whirlpools, India's focus should be back-to-inward-basics. Enduring domestic capacity-building, not ephemeral diplomatic grand-stands. Brutal fact is, India's capacities, while not insignificant, are mortally hostage to critical chokepoints.

Capital, energy, industrial inputs, industrial capacity, and military tech constitute the core sinews of national power. Unfortunately, barring one (capital), India faces significant external vulnerabilities in each. Even in capital, the country doesn't have a surplus to trade off vulnerabilities in other areas.

India imports 85% of its crude, and over half of its natural gas needs. Managing energy access is a constant play in geopolitical manoeuvring. Issue is, unlike China (or Japan), India lacks enough surpluses to trade. Ergo, the geopolitical dance around energy, often extracts a higher price of us than China.

Industrial inputs and capacity are the lifeblood of modern industry. China is the global near-monopoly

Image: AI

blood-bank, especially in critical industrial intermediates – pharma APIs, rare earths, heavy machinery, EV components. No wonder, despite Galwan, India's trade deficit with China has more than doubled since 2020 (from $44bn to over $100bn today).

Thus, India has had to settle for an uneasy modus vivendi with China.

Military tech has been the cutting-edge of geopolitical knife-fights throughout history. India is, perhaps, the only major power that constantly wears the ignominious crown of being the world's largest importer of weapons. Thanks to the crafty geopolitical dance the country has had to play to access miltech, India's arsenal is a menagerie of Russian, French, Israeli, and US gear.

Risks are not just in the realm of leverage and access. It's also in the realm of sustenance – even the famed US military-industrial complex is struggling to supply a war against a vastly outgunned Iran. India's vulnerability here is structural. R&D expenses are tiny (0.5% of GDP, quarter of China's level). Bulk of it is in the public sector. Result is, a critical all-round vulnerability on tech-access, and an ecosystem geared for screw-driver assemblies.

Capital is one domain that shows the way. India is largely self-sufficient in both, banking and risk capital, needed to finance investments. Foreign capital's primary use case is balance of payment equations, not to fill an investment gap. It was achieved via a serendipitous policy web – strict capital controls that trapped domestic savings within, opening of large swathes of financial services to the private sector, while keeping foreign control relatively restricted, a public tech-regulatory stack that benchmarked itself globally.

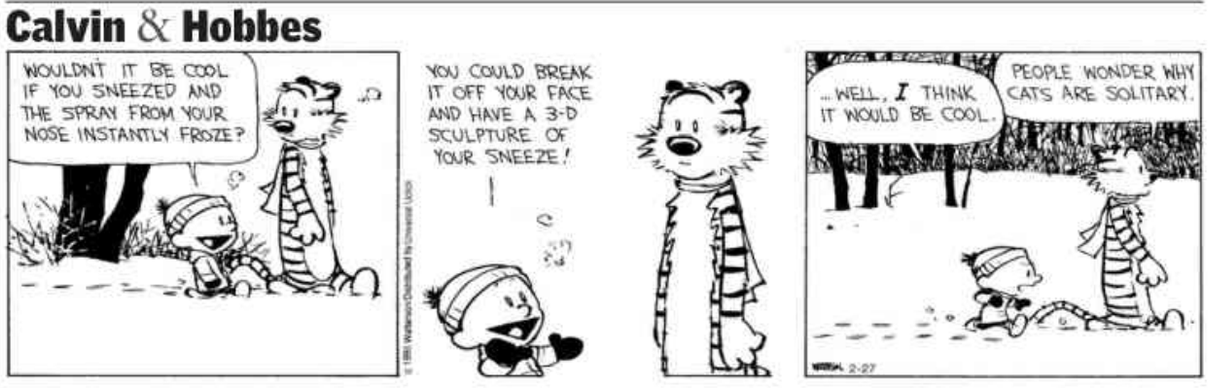
Other areas need a similar template – strong domestic protection, systemic accountability for the domestic product to meet global standards, but in the meantime live with a 70% Indian product (or 20% more expensive one) instead of the *perfect import*, foreign capital invited only under cover of Indian control.

In 1914, while Europe sleepwalked into a war, US maintained a policy of strict neutrality for three years. It provided money and supplies to UK, France, and other allied powers. But it wasn't before Germans started attacking US interests directly, that president Wilson joined the war in 1917. By then, most European powers had exhausted themselves, and US emerged at the end of WW1 as the single-most powerful nation-state on earth.

As a new Sarajevo 1914 unfolds, India needs to emulate US 1914 – sharply inward-focused, build capacities, set up transactional relationships with all friendly sides, and let the rest of the world's powers exhaust themselves.

The writer is Chief Investment Officer of an asset and wealth management firm. Views are personal

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacred*space*

You and me are real people, operating in a real world. We are not figments of each other's imagination. I am the architect of my own self, my own character and destiny...We are all free, completely free.

Jean-Paul Sartre

The Journey From Attachment To Inner Bliss

Shri Shri Anandamurti

In the constant flux of our lives, desire and detachment stand as two opposing yet deeply interconnected forces. Desire pulls the mind outward towards objects, achievements, and sensory pleasures, while detachment gently guides it inwards, towards peace, clarity, and ultimate fulfilment. The balance between these two defines an individual's spiritual trajectory. The perceptible world, as described in ancient wisdom, is composed of five fundamental elements, earth, water, fire, air, and ether. Among these, *vyom*, ether, is the subtlest, perceivable only through its vibrational essence, sound. If even such subtle elements require special instruments to be understood, how then can the Supreme Consciousness, far subtler than all, be grasped by ordinary senses or intellect?

The answer lies in intuition, not mere intellectual reasoning. The Supreme Consciousness, or Purush, transcends mind and matter. It cannot be attained through logic, language, or sensory perception. As the ancient verse suggests, both mind and speech return unsuccessfully when they attempt to reach this ultimate reality. True realisation comes only when one transcends these limitations and experiences the Divine through inner awakening.

This is where the concept of Intuitional Science becomes significant. Unlike physical sciences, which are analytical and outward-looking, intuitive science is synthetic and inward-focused. It calls for introspection – a deep dive into the inner Self. External observation reveals only the surface, but internal vision unveils the deeper truth that everything is an expression of a single, unified consciousness.

THE SPEAKING TREE

The inward journey demands discipline, sincerity, and above all, devotion. It is not achieved through rituals, ceremonies, or intellectual pride. External practices may offer temporary satisfaction, but they cannot lead to the realisation of the eternal. True spiritual progress begins when one distinguishes between the transient and the permanent, *nityanitya vivek*. This discrimination helps the seeker turn away from fleeting pleasures and move towards everlasting bliss.

Desire, in its raw form, binds the mind to temporary objects. These objects: whether material possessions, relationships, or achievements, are inherently impermanent. They bring moments of joy but eventually lead to dissatisfaction or sorrow. The more the mind chases them, the more restless it becomes. Detachment does not mean renouncing the world, but rather understanding its true nature and not becoming enslaved by it.

Through meditation and ethical living, one gradually refines the mind. As the mind becomes subtler, it gains the capacity to perceive deeper realities. Eventually, it transcends its own limitations and merges into a state of supreme bliss – Anand. In this state, dualities like pleasure and pain, gain and loss, cease to exist.

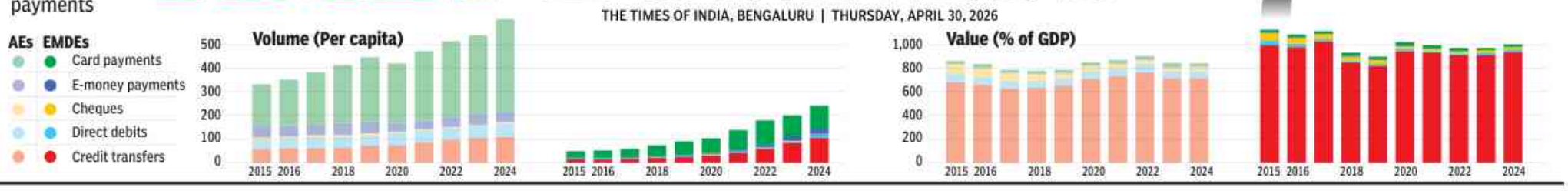
Central to this realisation is the sacred sound 'Om', considered the primal vibration of the universe. It serves as a bridge between the manifest and the unmanifest, the finite and the infinite. In spiritual practice, one does not merely chant it but learns to listen to its subtle resonance within. This inner listening aligns the individual consciousness with the cosmic rhythm.

Shri Shri Anandamurtiji's 105th birth anniversary is on May 1

TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026

In emerging market and developing economies (EMDEs), the number of annual cashless payments per capita increased by 21% to 242. In advanced economies (AEs), the per capita annual number of cashless payments was substantially higher at 579, but clocked just 6% growth. The value of cashless payments as a percentage of GDP generally plateaued in AEs and increased slightly (3%) in EMDEs

Trends in cashless payments



Source: BIS CPMI, Red Book Statistics, authors calculations

RBI's new NBFC rules a blow to Tata Sons' plan to stay unlisted

Rejects Argument That Could Allow Co To Give Up Fin Licence

Reeba.Zachariah
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Mumbai: The RBI has dealt a blow to Tata Sons' bid to avoid going public, rejecting an argument that would have allowed the Tata conglomerate's holding company to surrender its financial licence and avoid a mandatory stock exchange listing. In directions published on Wednesday, RBI clarified that equity received from group companies with access to capital markets counts as indirect access to public funds, explicitly dismissing suggestions for a narrower interpretation. The rules take effect on July 1.

The ruling strikes at the heart of Tata Sons' March 2024 application to deregister as a core investment company, a category of NBFC through which large conglomerates hold stakes in group companies. That application rested on the assertion that Tata Sons does not access public funds, having prepaid its standalone debt. The RBI's clarification renders that claim untenable, legal experts say, given that its operating arms, including Tata Steel, Tata Motors, Tata Power, Indian Hotels and Tata Chemicals accessed debt markets when providing funds to the holding company.

It was argued that equity injected by a group company into an NBFC should not automatically be treated as indirect public funds, provided the investing entity certifies that the capital originated from its own resources rather than borrowed money. RBI rejected the proposal, stating that companies routinely deploy leverage on their own capital, that funds flow through multiple corporate layers, and that money is inherently fungible, making it impossible to trace whether an equity investment is truly free of borrowed funds. The origins of Tata Sons' indirect access to public funds can be traced to a 1995 rights issue. Until then, listed group entities were not shareholders in the holding company. But Tata Trusts, the largest shareholder in Tata Sons, which was barred by law from subscribing to the issue, relinquished their rights in favour of the group companies, which paid a renunciation premium to the trusts. That transaction left listed Tata entities holding 13% of Tata Sons. The latest directions also carve out a deregistration pathway for NBFCs that do not access public funds and have no customer interface, provided their assets are below Rs 1,000 crore. RBI had proposed an over Rs 1 lakh crore asset threshold for upper-layer NBFC classification, a category where Tata Sons already sits. Tata Sons remains the only entity on RBI's upper-layer list, first published in Sept 2022, that has not complied with mandatory listing requirements. The question of an IPO has exposed divisions within Tata Trusts itself, with chairman Noel Tata opposed while vice-chairmen Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh both in favour.

HOW THINGS STAND

- **Sept 2022** | RBI classifies Tata Sons as an upper-layer core investment company, mandating listing within 3 years
- **2024** | Tata Sons prepays debt to avoid accessing public funds; submits deregistration application; says the application is under RBI review
- **Sept 2025** | Tata Sons misses the RBI listing deadline
- **2026** | RBI states that equity received by a group company with access to public funds will be treated as indirect access to public funds

Infy reinforces hybrid work, shifts delivery to 'T20 mode'

Times News Network

Bengaluru: Infosys is reinforcing its flexible hybrid work model while urging employees to align more closely with their base locations to drive collaboration and efficiency.

At a recent town hall, its chief human resources officer Shaji Mathew said the company will continue its policy requiring employees to work from the office at least 10 days a month, positioning it as one of the industry's more flexible frameworks.

"We are not asking employees to come five days a week. The idea is to offer flexibility while ensuring collaboration and learning," he said.

However, Mathew acknowledged operational constraints, particularly in smaller locations, noting that office expansion cannot scale indefinitely. He encouraged employees to work from their designated base locations to support better infrastructure planning. While reiterating its flexible approach, Infosys leadership stressed the importance of in-person collaboration, especially as work undergoes rapid transformation driven by artificial intelligence. Executives cautioned that excessive reliance on remote work could hinder learning, skill development, and innovation, adding that face-to-face interactions enable faster capability building.

Cognizant preps $270mn severance; job cuts likely

US Co To Acquire Tech Firm Astreya For $600Mn, Buy To Boost AI Infra Capabilities

Shilpa Phadnis & Veena Mani | TNN

Bengaluru: It's not encouraging news for Cognizant employees.

The company rolled out a global programme, Project Leap, and expects to incur costs of $230 million to $320 million, recognising most of these expenses in 2026. This includes $200 million to $270 million in employee severance costs. Sources said the initiative could affect thousands of roles over the next eight months, including in India, which accounts for a large share of the company's workforce.

While Cognizant's management declined to disclose the number of employees likely to be impacted, industry estimates suggest that every $100 million in restructuring costs could translate into roughly 10,000 jobs. When **TOI** asked whether the impact could be in the range of 20,000 to 30,000 employees, CFO Jatin Dalal said, "It is a global programme that will impact various parts of the organisation. We have not disclosed the specific number of employees who may be affected. However, this programme aims to prepare us for the future operating model, and we will execute it with the same focus and energy as any other strategic priority. It's equally important," he said during the earnings call on Wednesday.

The move comes amid a broader reset across the IT industry. Last year, TCS cut about 2% of its workforce — over 12,000 employees — with reductions largely impacting mid-level and senior roles, as companies shift investments towards AI, data and cybersecurity while redeploying or exiting legacy talent. For the March quarter, Cognizant reported revenue of $5.4 billion, up 5.8% year-on-year in dollar terms and 3.9% in constant currency. It expects full-year 2026 revenue in the range of $22 billion to $22.6 billion, reflecting growth of 4.8% to 7.3% (or 4% to 6.5% in constant currency). The company also raised its full-year operating margin guidance to 16%-16.2%. Cognizant said Project Leap will help improve margins. It now expects adjusted operating margin expansion of 20 to 40 basis points in 2026, up from its earlier estimate of 10 to 30 basis points. Following the results, Cognizant shares fell nearly 2% in early trade on the Nasdaq on Wednesday. Attrition remained low at 12.3% and largely unchanged despite a recalibration in how the company defines the metric. Cognizant said its definition of voluntary attrition in tech services now excludes certain categories of negotiated separations, with prior periods recast for comparability.

At the same time, the company continues to hire. Cognizant added about 6,000 employees sequentially and 21,300 year-on-year, taking its total workforce to around 3.5 lakh. It plans to recruit more than 20,000 graduates in 2026 after hiring a similar number last year. The changes reflect a deeper shift in the business model as AI reshapes the services industry. "How do you transfer this from a people business to a platforms business and how do you create commercial models which will enable you to own the outcomes? The industry will be back into a hyper growth era. (But) You cannot approach it just with a people endeavour. You have to approach it with the courage to actually own operational outcomes for enterprises. And if you're able to own it, it's going to be nonlinear both on the input and the output," said Cognizant CEO Ravi Kumar.

GROWTH VS RESET

- Q1 revenue at $5.4 billion, up 5.8% YoY
- Full-year revenue seen at $22–$22.6 billion
- Operating margin guidance raised to 16%–16.2%
- Margin expansion seen at 20–40 basis points
- Attrition steady at 12.3% despite metric change

> The industry will be back into a hyper-growth era. (But) You cannot approach it just with a people endeavour. You have to approach it with the courage to actually own operational outcomes for enterprises. And if you're able to own it, it's going to be nonlinear both on the input and the output
> **Ravi Kumar**
> CEO, COGNIZANT

Astreya brings large-scale data centre expertise

The company is also strengthening its AI infrastructure capabilities through acquisitions. It is acquiring Astreya, a tech firm specialising in AI infrastructure and data centre services, in a deal valued at about $600 million — its third-largest acquisition after Trizetto and Belcan. Astreya manages over 500,000 end users and supports nearly 30% of the world's data centres for large enterprises. "Between 2025 and 2030 there is a projected $6.7 trillion AI data centre infrastructure buildout currently reshaping the global technology landscape, with global capacity expected to double in five years. The five largest hyperscalers are expected to spend nearly $700 billion on infrastructure in 2026 alone. By acquiring Astreya ..., we will be even better-positioned to help clients architect their platform-led AI systems and operationalise them at scale," Kumar said.

₹ closes at new low of 94.85 as West Asia peace talks stall

Times News Network

Mumbai: The rupee fell to a record closing low of 94.85 per dollar on Wednesday, declining by 31 paise from its previous close of 94.54, as rising oil prices, stalled geopolitical developments, and continued foreign outflows weighed on the currency.

Pressure on the rupee came amid a broader weakening across Asian currencies, with the Philippine peso and the Indonesian rupiah also hitting record lows. The absence of a breakthrough in talks between the United States and Iran continued to cloud the outlook for global oil supplies, adding to uncertainty in currency markets.

According to Bloomberg data, the real effective exchange rate, a trade-weighted measure against a basket of 40 currencies, fell to a 12-year low, indicating that the rupee remains undervalued despite recent weakness. The impact of earlier RBI measures to curb speculation has faded, allowing downward pressure to resume, although intermittent dollar sales by RBI helped limit sharper losses.

Crude oil prices rose more than 3% to around $115 per barrel, putting pressure on oil-importing economies and their currencies.

Rupee depreciation feeds directly into inflation through higher costs for crude oil, edible oils and capital goods. A commonly cited rule of thumb from market analysts is that a 5% depreciation (equivalent to about 4–5 rupees at current dollar denomination levels) adds about 1–2 percentage points to headline inflation.

₹'s cheapest valuation in 12 years

Attractive entry point for investors: CEA Anantha Nageswaran

Weak rains, war downside risks to eco: Finmin report

New Delhi: The West Asia conflict and weak monsoon pose a downside risk to India's economic growth and may put pressure on inflation, fiscal and external deficits, the finance ministry said in its monthly economic review released on Wednesday.

It, however, added that while seeking to sustain economic growth, policy is expected to safeguard medium-term fiscal and external stability. "While the West Asia conflict constitutes a significant supply shock with rising risks to inflation, trade, and financial flows, India's domestic demand, policy buffers, resilient financial system, and sustained public investment provide some insulation," it said.

The report also said that some countries have begun to allow higher costs to be passed on to consumers as well as industry. "Some are yet to do so. But it is inevitable. During a period of supply disruption, demand has to moderate. Failing that, countries will have to pay a much higher price for energy supplies," it added. TNN

RBI's new 'calamity chapter' to benefit sound accounts

Times News Network

Mumbai: RBI has introduced a new 'calamity chapter' in its guidelines, creating a dedicated framework for disaster-related relief that separates such measures from general restructuring and tightens eligibility, accounting, and provisioning norms.

Unlike in the past when relief measures were handled under broader restructuring frameworks, the new rules establish a distinct Chapter VI-A for natural calamities and similar disruptions. A key change is the introduction of a strict eligibility filter that limits relief to borrowers who were standard and not in default for more than 30 days at the time of the calamity. This 30-day default rule creates a clear boundary to ensure that only sound accounts benefit and prevents misuse of relief measures to mask pre-existing stress.

The framework also allows banks to implement relief measures on a suo moto basis after recommendations from relevant banking committees, removing the earlier requirement for borrowers to initiate restructuring requests. Borrowers retain the option to opt out, but the change is expected to speed up the delivery of relief. Another shift lies in income recognition norms. Banks are now permitted to continue recognising income on an accrual basis for these restructured accounts, in contrast to earlier practices where such accounts often moved to cash-based recognition, affecting reported earnings.

The guidelines also introduce a specific provisioning requirement of 5% for such accounts, creating a clearer and more standardised prudential buffer. Earlier frameworks relied on more general provisioning norms without a fixed requirement for calamity-linked restructuring.

Broking platform Sahi raises $33mn

Bengaluru: Sahi, a broking platform focused on active traders, has raised $33 million in a round led by Accel, with participation from Elevation Capital. Founded in 2023 by Dale Vaz and Manish Jain, Sahi operates as an NSE and BSE-registered broker and targets serious retail traders seeking institutional-grade tools at lower costs. TNN

Bajaj Finance net rises 22% at ₹5.5k cr

Mumbai: Bajaj Finance reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,553 crore for Q4FY26, up 22% from Rs 4,546 crore a year earlier, supported by a 21% rise in net total income and a 20% increase in net interest income despite one-time actions including accelerated credit loss provisions and charges related to New Labour Codes. TNN

Times Music acquires Punjabi music co Catrack

Times News Network

New Delhi: The Times Group-owned Times Music has announced the acquisition of Catrack Entertainment, its third strategic acquisition and a key step forward in its ongoing partnership with Primary Wave Music.

"The deal brings a culturally significant Punjabi music catalogue into its fold, unlocking a legacy repertoire for renewed global discovery and commercial scale," the company said in a press release. This follows Times Music's earlier acquisitions of ARC Musicq and Symphony Recording Co.

"At The Times Group, we have always championed the voices that define India's cultural fabric and with the acquisition of Catrack; Times Music reaffirms its commitment to preserving and powerfully amplifying the rich heritage of Punjabi music worldwide," The Times Group MD Vineet Jain said in a statement.

Established in 1990, Catrack Entertainment is a pioneering Punjabi music label. Its "golden era" catalogue features iconic artists such as Babbu Maan, Malkit Singh, Channi Singh, and Dolly Singh, while supporting early talent like Manmohan Waris, Surjit Khan, and Sukhwinder Panchhi.

AbbVie's patent on immunology therapy rejected

Cheaper Versions Can Enter

Rupali.Mukherjee
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: In good news for patients, Indian Patent Office has refused a patent on MNC firm AbbVie's blockbuster immunology therapy Rinvoq, paving the way for affordable versions to enter the domestic market.

In a recent hearing, the Delhi Patent Office held that the claimed invention was "obvious" and lacked inventive step, a violation of Section 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act, legal experts told **TOI**.

Section 3(d), an important safeguard in the patent law, bars patents on new forms of known substances, unless they demonstrate a significant enhancement in therapeutic efficacy. Swiss firm Novartis has lost the patent on its blockbuster cancer drug Glivec in 2013 under this provision, aimed at preventing "evergreening" of pharmaceutical patents.

The application, filed in 2012, faced pre-grant opposition from generic drug makers including MSN Labs and Natco, with hearings stretching over nearly a year. Rinvoq (upadacitinib), used for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and several autoimmune diseases, is AbbVie's second best-selling drug behind Skyrizi, with around $10 billion in sales.

S Majumdar from law firm S Majumdar & Co who represented Natco said: "Patent law rewards genuine innovation by granting a time-limited monopoly (patent rights), enabling the patentee to exclude unauthorised parties from exploiting the invention.

This decision of the Patent Office provides important clarity on core patent law concepts, particularly obviousness and technical advance — especially in situations involving common inventors between prior art and patent application— along with evergreening and extent of disclosure required to sustain a priority claim." Sources said AbbVie is yet to launch the drug in India and has sought approval from regulator to introduce it for atopic dermatitis. According to Tata 1mg e-pharmacy, MSN Labs and Dr Reddy's have started marketing the therapy for the indication of ulcerative colitis.

'No Inventive Step'

Claimed invention is "obvious" and lacks inventive step, a violation of Section 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act, says legal experts

> The applicant has failed to provide any comparative data demonstrating the therapeutic effect associated with nitrile (–CN) group. In absence of such evidence, the submitted data cannot be considered sufficient to support an inventive step," says an official

US Fed keeps key rate unchanged

Washington: The Federal Reserve left its benchmark interest rate unchanged for the third straight meeting but signalled it could still cut rates in the coming months, drawing the highest number of dissents since Oct 1992.

The Fed on Wednesday kept its short-term rate at 3.6% and retained language in its statement suggesting the next move could be a rate cut. Three officials dissented in favour of removing the reference to a future cut, while a fourth, Stephen Miran, dissented in favour of an immediate rate cut.

The dissents underscore divisions within the Fed's 12-member rate-setting committee ahead of the departure of chair Jerome Powell, whose term ends May 15. AP

Markets bank on West Asia truce, sensex up 609 pts

Mumbai: Fresh hopes for peace in West Asia lifted investor sentiment globally on Wednesday. On Dalal Street sensex was up over 1,000 points in mid-session, but profit taking at higher levels pulled it down a bit from early highs and it closed 609 points up at 77,496 points. TNN

IOB profit up 56% at ₹5.2k cr in FY26

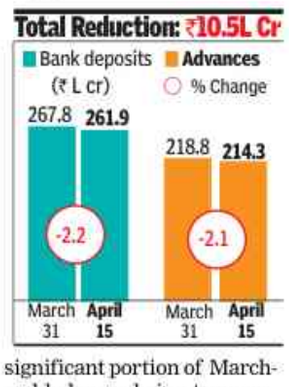
Chennai: Indian Overseas Bank's annual net profit crossed Rs 5,000 crore for the first time, with the public sector lender reporting FY26 profits at Rs 5,209 crore, up 56% from Rs 3,335 crore in FY25, driven by higher income and lower provisions and tax expenses. The bank's operating profit also crossed Rs 10,000 crore for the first time. TNN

Reversal of yr-end bulge in deposits, advances point to window dressing

Times News Network

Mumbai: Banking data for the fortnight ended April 15, 2026 showed a sharp contraction in deposits and advances after a surge at the March 31 year-end, highlighting the scale of balance sheet adjustments and exposing the window dressing in the system.

Bank deposits fell from Rs 267.8 lakh crore on March 31 to Rs 261.9 lakh crore by April 15, a contraction of 2.2%, while advances declined from Rs 218.8 lakh crore to Rs 214.3 lakh crore, a drop of 2.1%. The combined reduction of around Rs 10.5 lakh crore across both sides of bank balance sheets within a fortnight points to a significant portion of March-end balances being temporary in nature. The data indicates that a part of the March 31 spike reflected transitory adjustments rather than underlying business growth. Year-on-year growth remains firm, with deposits up 12.1% and advances rising 14.9%. The sequential decline after March 31 shows that the year-end peak was not sustained, and the latest data provides a clearer view of underlying trends after the effect of short-term balance sheet adjustments.



The shift to a fixed March 31st reporting date has brought this pattern into sharper focus. Earlier, RBI followed a reporting cycle based on alternate Fridays, which allowed a gap between the last reporting date and the financial year-end. According to the revised framework, banks now report balances on the last day of the month, including March 31, aligning disclosures with the fiscal year-end.

Banks window dress businesses by mobilising short-term deposits from corporate clients and pushing large credit disbursements in the final days of the financial year to meet targets and regulatory ratios. Typically, these positions are reversed after March 31 once reporting is completed, with short-term loans repaid and corporate funds moving out for tax payments or redeployment, contributing to the decline seen by mid-April.

The credit-deposit ratio rose marginally from 81.7% to 81.8% during this period, indicating that deposits declined faster than advances.

IInd Call

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
Municipal Corporation Amritsar
Tender Reference No. E-Tender Notice No.18 Date 29.04.2026

The Department of	:	Municipal Corporation, Amritsar Invites Bid for "Construction of Heritage Entrance Gate around Walled City Amritsar" (Amt.Rs. 6,08,05,561/-)
Closing Date and Time	:	11.05.2026 upto 03:00 PM
EMD	:	2% of Estimate Amount.
For Detail log onto	:	https://eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note	:	Any Corrigendum(s) to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.

Superintending Engineer (c), Municipal Corporation, Amritsar.

DPR/Pb.:1596/12/2026-27/11038

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, संभाग, अजमेर

क्रमांक-अमुअ/ अज./तक./एफ-2(30ए) निविदा / डी-274 दिनांक: 27.04.2026

निविदा सूचना संख्या 06 वर्ष 2026-2027

राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से पोर्टेशियल असेसमेंट पद्धति के अनुसार अजमेर जिले में सी.सी. सड़क निर्माण के चार पैकेजों के लिए उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, राजस्थान में पंजीकृत अथवा राज्य सरकार के अन्य विभागों / केन्द्र सरकार के अधीकृत संगठनों / केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग / डाक एवम् दूर संचार विभाग / रेलवे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत एए श्रेणी के संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेंट प्रक्रिया के माध्यम से ऑन लाईन निविदा प्राप्त की जावेगी। ई-निविदा से संबंधित विवरण वेबसाईट **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** एवं **http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** पर देखा जा सकता है।

NIB No.:- PWD2627A0229
UBN No.:- PWD2627WLOB01010 To PWD 2627WLOB01013

Sd/-
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता सा.नि.वि. सम्भाग अजमेर।

DIPR/C/7574/2026

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED
(A Government of Andhra Pradesh Undertaking & An ISO 27001-2022 Certified Company)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The APTRANSCO invites bids online for supply of the following. Sl.No.1. Spec. No. PMM11-e-24/2026: 220kV & 132kV Solid Core Insulators. Sl.No.2. Spec. No. PMM12-e-22/2026: 400kV SF6 Gas Circuit Breakers. **Date & Time of availability of tenders: Sl.No.1- 28.04.2026 at 05:00PM & Sl.No.2- 30.04.2026 at 5:00 PM.** For details refer: **www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in. Contact No. CE/ Transmission: 0866- 2429230.**

R.O. No. GMCC/APTRANSCO/25/26-27 **Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER/TRANSMISSION**

NTPC Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

Invitation for Expression of interest (EOI)

As per revised guidelines issued by Ministry of Power Dated-30.01.2026 NTPC Kudgi shall reserve certain percentage of issuable quantity of Dry Fly Ash for supply to Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs) and Local users at a concessional rate. The supply of Fly Ash shall be made on an "as is where is" basis (Transportation cost will be borne by user). In this regard Expression of interest (EOI) is being invited from all MSEs (micro and small enterprises) involved in Ash based product manufacturing and local users (within 100 km distance to NTPC Kudgi Plant) for lifting of Dry Fly Ash from our Ash silos at a concessional rate with respect to sale under open category.

LOCAL USERS (Situated within 100km radius of the plant) will have to submit self-declaration(affidavit) stating their Daily/monthly Fly Ash requirement along with nature/area of ash utilization supported by 'Latitude & Longitude' and confirmation that the Ash will be utilized solely for Eco-friendly purposes.

All MSEs will have to submit either a valid "Consent to Operate" (CTO)issued by CPCB/SPCBs wherever applicable or a valid MSE / Udyam registration certificate and self-declaration(affidavit) stating their plant location (latitude and longitude) and details of Ash based products being manufactured and plant capacity with daily/monthly requirement of Dry Fly Ash & confirmation that the Ash will be utilized solely for Eco-friendly purposes.

The documents are to be submitted to the mail id – aukudgi@ntpc.co.in
Last date of submission of documents is 16.05.2026.

Registered Office Address: NTPC Bhawan, Core-7, SCOPE Complex, 7-Institutional Area, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003
Corporate Identification Number- L40101DL1975GOI007966

Leading the Power Sector

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)
Corporate Office, "MESCOM BHAVANA", Bejai, Mangalore - 575 004
Ph: 0824-2885885 CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425

No: MESCOM/IT/99/2022-IT/2026 Date: 29.04.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal)

MESCOM invites the tender from the prospective bidders for **"Selection of an Agency for providing Annual Technical Support (ATS) for "Nanna MESCOM" Android and IOS based Mobile App-Call-2"** vide Tender Enquiry No: **MESCOM/2026-27/SE0179.**

The interested eligible bidders may log on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/** on or after **04.05.2026.** For information about the KPP portal, contact the helpline at **+91-9240214000/ 9240214001** or e-mail address: **support@eprochelpdesk.com**

Sd/-,
Executive Engineer (Ele) (IT)

DIPR/DK/KSMCA/147/26-27 dt: 29.04.2026

For Power Related Complaints & Assistance Call Toll Free Number 1912

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
NOTIFICATION
Hubballi, the 21st April, 2026

S.O. 1986(E) - In the exercise of the powers conferred by clause (6) of section 20F and clause 7A of South Western Railway, Road Safety Projects, Hubballi) hereby authorizes the officers mentioned in column (4) of the table below as 'Competent Authority' and the officers mentioned in column (5) of the table below as 'Arbitrator' to perform the functions as such authority under the said Act with effect from date of publication of this notification in the official gazette in respect of Special Railway Projects mentioned in column (2) relating to districts mentioned in column (3) of the table below for Land Acquisition required for the public purpose.

SN	Name of the Project	District	Competent Authority	Arbitrator
1	Bangalore city Jolarpettai - Construction of Road Over Bridge (ROB) in lieu of LC No.112 at km 273/100-200 between Kamsamudram and Bisanattam station.	Kolar	Assistant Commissioner, Kolar	Regional Commissioner, Bengaluru

[F.No.SWR/W.352/RSP/Land/CALA/2026]
For details log on : https://egazette.gov.in

NINGAPPA CHANDAPPA CHALUWADI,
Deputy Chief Engineer/Road Over Bridgs, Road Safety Projects/ Hubballi

PUB/74/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the **RailOne** app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways

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Govt of Karnataka
O/o OF DIST HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE SERVICES, BALLARI. Telephone: 08392 -276250
e-mail: dhobellari@gmail.com

No:DHO/NRDMSCSRFUND/MMU/RFP/01/2026-27 **Date: 27-4-2026**

TENDER NOTIFICATION

The District Health & Family Welfare Officer and TIA, Ballari, hereby invite e-tenders from eligible bidders for the empanelment and selection of service providers to operate 10 Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) in Sandur Taluk, Ballari District, under the NMDC CSR fund. The schedule of events for the said e-tender notification is detailed below.

The details of the same can be viewed from e-procurement portal of government of Karnataka https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home.

1.Tender must be submitted online through KPPP e- portal on or before: 26/05/2026 @ 05:00 PM.
2.e-Tender Amount Rs.342.00 Lakhs.
3.Tender Indent No: DHFWS/2026-27/SE2208.

Sd/- District Health & Family Welfare Officer, Ballari & TIA.

DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/101

MUNICIPAL CORPORATION CHANDIGARH
New Deluxe Building, Sector 17, Chandigarh Tel: 0172-2773340

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Subject: Operation & Maintenance of C&D Waste Management Facility in Chandigarh for a period of 5 years further with extension of 2 years.

Online bids are invited from the interested bidders / agencies / companies for "Operation & Maintenance of C&D Waste Management Facility in Chandigarh for a period of 5 years further with extension of 2 years".

Interested bidders may download the RFP document from the e-tendering portal i.e. **www.etenders.chd.nic.in** and submit their bids latest by **19.05.2026** before **12.00 PM** on the e-tendering portal.

Corrigendum (if any) related to this RFP will be published online at www.etenders.chd.nic.in.

Executive Engineer
Road Division No. 3, Municipal Corporation Chandigarh

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN:U40109KA1999SGC025521)

No.:CGM(Tech)/DGM(PROC &APCC)/EE(PROC)-3/AEE7/2026-27/498-515 Date:29.04.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal only)

KPTCL invites Bids on electronic mode for the following works against following Enquiry Numbers:

Tender Enquiry No. & Name of the Works

KPTCL/2026-27/TL/WORK_INDENT3649
Combined package of:

Work-A: i) Conversion of existing 66kV Anekal- Attibele SC line with Coyote ACSR to DC line with High Power Conductor of 700 Ampacity (Equivalent to Drake capacity) in the existing DC towers corridor for a route length of 6.6KMs.
ii) Strengthening of 66kV Yarandanahalli-Anekal 1 & 2 DC Line from 220/66/11kV Yarandanahalli station to 66/11kV Anekal sub-station by replacing existing Coyote ACSR conductor by High Power Conductor of 700Ampacity (Equivalent to ACSR Drake Ampacity) for a length of 9.2 kms.
iii) Construction of 66kV terminal bays at existing 66/11kV Attibele sub-station, in view of stringing of 2nd circuit 66kV HTLS conductor from existing 66/11kV Anekal sub-station to the existing 66/11kV Attibele sub-station.
iv) Construction of 66kV terminal bays at existing 66/11kV Anekal sub-station, in view of stringing of 2nd circuit 66kV HTLS conductor from existing 66/11kV Anekal sub-station to the existing 66/11kV Attibele sub-station.
Work-B: i) Strengthening of existing 66kV Pilagumpa D/C line by replacing the existing coyote D/C line from 220/66 kV Ekarajapura station to tower # 18 in the existing M/C line corridor of DG-3, DG-4, Volvo-Nandagudi & Pilagumpa line on M/C tower and D/C coyote line from tower # 19 to pilagumpa sub-station by using HTLS/HPC conductor for a route length of 4.506 km.
ii) Replacement of existing 66kV CTs by new capacity CTs at 220/66kV Ekarajapura and 66/11kV Pilagumpa sub-stations for strengthening of 66kV Ekarajapura-Pilagumpa Line with Coyote ACSR conductor by HTLS/HPC conductor (equivalent to current carrying capacity of Drake conductor).
iii) Dismantling of Existing Coyote conductor & accessories in order to strengthen the existing 66kV Ekarajapura-Pilagumpa Line from 220/66kV Ekarajapura and 66/11kV Pilagumpa sub-station for a distance of 4.506Km.
on Total Turnkey basis including Supply of all Materials/ equipments, Mandatory Spares, Erection (Including Civil Works) of all materials/equipments, Testing and Commissioning & dismantling (buy back of released materials from existing line)
Last date & time for receipt of Bids is **30.05.2026 @15.00 Hrs.**

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The details regarding participation in the e-tendering process can be obtained by logging on to KPTCL website **https://kptcl.karnataka.gov.in** with hyperlink "E Procurement KPTCL" or **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after 30.04.2026. Any extension of Due date for Bid submission will be intimated in the Karnataka Public Procurement portal.** Any details required in this regard can also be had from the Office of the undersigned during Office hours.

All Corrigendum/Addendums shall be noticed by the bidders before the last date of submission of the Bids.

Sd/- Chief General Manager(Tech), KPTCL, Corporate Office, 11th Floor, Indhana Bhavan, Bengaluru-560009.

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivaji Nagar Division, Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bangalore

Tender NO. EE/SJN/E-PROC/05/2026-27 Date: 29.04.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER
(Two Cover System)

(Through GOK KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only)

The Executive Engineer (Shivaji Nagar Division), BCCC, Bangalore invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES/ National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the construction of work detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of Work
1.	Construction of stepped gabion seater near waste weir, boating area, lake observation decks and walkway improvement in Ulsoor Lake (Call-II). **Amount Put to Tender (Without GST) : Rs. 786.90 Lakhs, EMD : Rs. 11,80,000.00**
2.	Park area development, construction of seating plaza, civic center and other finishing works in Ulsoor Lake (Call-II). **Amount Put to Tender (Without GST) : Rs. 787.20 Lakhs, EMD : Rs. 11,80,000.00**

Calendar of Events : (1) Pre bid meeting will be held on **14.05.2026 at 15.00** in the office of the Chief Engineer Zone-2, Bengaluru City Central Palike, Annexure-3, 4th Floor, GBA office compound, N R Square, Bengaluru **(2)** Last Date for uploading the Filled Tender Document is **16.05.2026 up to 16.00 pm. (3)** Date of Technical bid opening of Tenders is on **18.05.2026 by 11.00 am (4)** Date of Financial bid Opening of Tenders is on after Technical bid approved.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Shivaji Nagar Division, BCCC

1001/29/2627

The Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd.
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
(An ISO:9001:2008 certified Govt. Company)
Industrial Estate, Madhupatna, CUTTACK -753 010. Odisha.
Tel No.: 0671-2341204,2342816 Fax: 0671-2341875/2342561
e-mail: osicltd@gmail.com, osicltd@rediffmail.com, website: osicltd.in

TENDER CALL NOTICE

Ref no.901/OSIC/MKT **Date : 27.04.2026**

The Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (OSIC) (A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking), Industrial Estate, Madhupatna, Cuttack 753010, Odisha invites Tenders in sealed cover under two bid system i.e., Technical Bid & Price Bid for "Procurement & Supply of Furniture for Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar" in Online mode.

Date of Commencement of Tender	Last Date & Time of online submission of Tender	Date & Time for online opening of Technical Bid
27.04.2026 03.30 PM	18.05.2026 5.30 PM	19.05.2026 12.30 PM

The tender notice may be downloaded from **http://tendersorissa.gov.in./** website: **www.osicltd.in** and the tender document canbe downloaded **http://tendersorissa.gov.in.** Any corrigendum / addendum / information relating to this NIT will only be uploaded in above websites which will not be published in Newspapers.

Sd/-
MANAGER (MKT)

OIPR-1001/1450/1/26-27/0003

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief
2nd Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G Road, Bangalore - 560 009.

No.: BWSSB/EIC/ACE(UFW)/TA(UFW)/377/2026-27 Date: 29.04.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER
(Only through KPP Portal)

BWSSB invites tender in two stage tender from eligible tenderers for the work of **repair, replacement of EMF Flow Meters at Central Division and various locations coming under AEE (UFW) Sub division.**

Amount put to tender: **Rs. 396.32 Lakhs**. EMD: **Rs. 5.95 Lakhs.**

Last date and time for reciept of tenders will be on **15.05.2026** upto **16:00 hrs**. The bids will be opened on **16.05.2026** at **16:30 hrs**. The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**. For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

Sd/-
Engineer-in-Chief

DIPR/CP/MIA/419/2026-27

13001/301/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION, BALANGIR.
Email. ID - eephbgr@yahoo.co.in, Ph. No-(06652-234647)
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. ACEPHBGR 01 /2026-27 Dt. 21.04.2026

01.	Name of the Work	:	06 No.
02.	Estimated Cost	:	Approx Rs. 9.20 Lakhs to 682.08 Lakhs
03.	Period of Completion	:	03 Month to 10 Months
04.	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	:	From 11.00 AM of dt. 04.05.2026 to 5.00 PM of dt. 18.05.2026
05.	Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal	:	5 PM of dt. 18.05.2026
06.	Date & Time of opening of bids	:	At 11.00 AM of dt. 19.05.2026
07.	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:	**The Superintending Engineer, Office Of The Superintending Engineer Public Health Division, Balangir, At-Tulasinagar, Po/Dist-Balangir, Pin-767001, Odisha, Phone:-06652-234647, E-mail:-eephbgr@yahoo.co.in**

Further details can be seen from the web site https://tenders.ori.nic.in or www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Sd/-
Addl. Chief Engineer
P.H.Division, Balangir

OIPR-13001/13005/1/26-27/0001

25001/57/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE BOLANGIR
e Procurement Notice

1	Name of work	:	Construction of Bridge in the district of Bolangir under **SBY** for the year 2025-26
2	No. of works	:	3 (Three) works.
3	Time for completion	:	12 (Twelve) Calendar months
4.	Approximate estimated cost varies from	:	Rs. 443.49 lakhs to Rs. 561.96 lakhs
5.	Mode of Submission of tender	:	Tender should be submitted online in **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
6.	**Other details are as follow**		

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on line for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Bolangir	**BLGR-Online-02/2026-27**	04.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	19.05.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	18.05.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	20.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	The date will be intimated later on

- Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
- Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
R.W.Circle, Bolangir

OIPR-25001/25118/1/26-27/0002

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

E-Procurement (IREPS) Tender Notice No.: H-GS-UBL-01-2026-27 Date : 23.04.26

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

Name of Work	Approx.Value
Hubballi Division:	Rs.29,08,46,770/-
Ballari - Rayadurg section: Provision of Two additional loop lines with R&D facilities along with associated Civil, Track, Signal, TRD and Electrical (Genl) works at Obulapuram station (Phase II) (Composite tender)	

Last date for Submission of bids :
Upto 11.00 hrs on 22.05.2026

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Chief Project Manager/Gati Shakti/ Hubballi

PUB/70/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the **RailOne** app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.

South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | @SWRAILWAYHQ | @sw_railways

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34001/135/2627

E-mail ID: cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in
cebuildings@rediffmail.com
Tel. (0674)-2391523

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No.- B-II-(OLL&C)-19/2026 **14526 / Bhubaneswar, the 27th April, 2026**

Invitation for Bids
1st Corrigendum

Tender Reference No. CE-Bldg-I-02/2026-27

Name of the Works: (1) "Planning, Design, Construction, Restoration and external development of Biplabi Dharanidhara Sangrahalaya at Kusumita Village in Keonjhar District".
(2) "Construction of (S+7) Storied Building near MHI for Infrastructure of Centre of Competence, SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack".
(3) "Construction of Community Health Centre at Barkote in the district of Deogarh".
(4) "Construction of Additional Classroom and Auditorium Hall at J. N. College, Mahanga in the district of Cuttack".

The following changes have been made in Bid Identification No. **CE-Bldg-I-02/2026-27.**

1. Bid documents such as DTCN/BOQ etc. can be seen / downloaded from the Govt. Website i.e. **www.tendersorissa.gov.in,** during the period from **dt.04.05.2026 to 17.00 hours of dt.19.05.2026** instead of dt.27.04.2026 to dt.12.05.2026 for ONLINE BIDDING respectively.
2. **Online** bids shall be received till **17.00 Hours of dt.19.05.2026** instead of dt.12.05.2026..
3. The technical bids will be opened at **11.30 A.M. of dt.20.05.2026** instead of dt.13.05.2026.

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Sd/- **Chief Engineer, Buildings-I Odisha, Bhubaneswar**

OIPR-34001/34181/1/26-27/0003

25001/70/2627

e-mail: serw_ctc@yahoo.com

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, CUTTACK

No. Tender Online RWC - 05/26 **Letter No.-1994** **Date : 24.04.2026**

e-Procurement NOTICE

1.	**Name of the work**	: Construction of **Road & Building** works.
2.	**Class of contractor**	
	c) Estimated cost more than Rs.6.00 Crore & upto Rs.50.00 Crore	: Special Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
	d) Estimated cost more than Rs.1.00 Crore & upto Rs.20.00 Crore	: A Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
	c) Estimated cost more than Rs. 20.00 Lakh & upto Rs.3.00 Crore	: B Class (of Odisha PWD) & relevant class of other licensing authorities.
3.	**Time for Completion**	: As specified in the **Column-7 of the Annexure.**
4.	**Detail Projects**	: **As per Annexure attached**
5.	**Other Details**	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Cuttack	Tender Online RWC - 05/26	04.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M.	18.05.2026 upto 05.00 P.M.	18.05.2026 upto 02.00 P.M.	19.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M.	Will be intimated later

Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in.**

Sd/- **Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Cuttack**

OIPR-25001/25097/1/26-27/0002

25001/58/2627

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE BOLANGIR
e Procurement Notice

1	Name of work	:	Construction of Roads in the district of Bolangir under the Scheme of IDF for the year 2025-26
2	No. of works	:	3 (Three) works.
3	Time for completion varies from	:	6 (Six) to 9 (Nine) Calendar months
4.	Approximate estimated cost varies from	:	Rs. 258.53 lakhs to Rs. 496.80 lakhs
5.	Mode of Submission of tender	:	Tender should be submitted online in **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
6.	**Other details are as follow**		

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on line for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Bolangir	**BLGR-Online-03/2026-27**	05.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	20.05.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	19.05.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	21.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	The date will be intimated later on

- Further details can be seen from the website **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**
- Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer
R.W.Circle, Bolangir

OIPR-25001/25118/1/26-27/0003

NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY ODISHA, CUTTACK
(Established by Odisha Act IV of 2008)
Kathajodi Campus, Sector 13, CDA, Cuttack - 753015, Odisha (Accredited by NAAC)

Advertisement for Guest Faculty at NLUO
Advt No.: NLUO/FR/GF-001/30.04.2026

NLU Odisha invites applications for engagement of Guest Faculty (purely temporary for one semester) for the **July-November 2026 Semester.**

Position	Subject	No. of Posts	Reservation	Remuneration
Guest Faculty	Law-06 Sociology-01 Economics-01	08	UR	Rs. 1,00,000/- per Semester per Subject. Subject to the fulfillment of terms and conditions

Interested and eligible candidates are to apply in the prescribed format available in the Career section of the University website **www.nluo.ac.in** latest by **11.05.2026 (5.00 P.M.).**
Note: The filled-in application form along with relevant documents and a Demand Draft of **Rs.500/-** should reach **The Registrar, NLU Odisha, Kathajodi Campus, CDA Sector-13, Cuttack-753015** on or before **11.05.2026 (5.00 P.M.).**
Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview. No TA/DA will be paid.
For any updates, please visit University website regularly, no separate communication will be made to the candidates.

Sd/- Registrar

4001/40/2627

ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(A GOVT. OF ODISHA UNDERTAKING)
CIN: U40101OR1995SGC003963
REGD. OFFICE: OHPC Corporate Office, Bhoi Nagar, Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022
Phone: 91-0674-2542983, 2542802, 2545526, 2542826
E-mail : ohpc.co@gmail.com, website : www.ohpcltd.com
e-Procurement Notice No. 01/2026-27
INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)

OHPC Ltd., Bhubaneswar invites **bids** on EPC rate in **double cover system (Cover-I Technical Bid and Cover-II Price bid)** for the below mentioned work through 'e'-procurement as detailed in the table below. The bids should be submitted 'online' in **https://tendersodisha.gov.in** by the "Super Class" contractors registered with the State Government or contractors of equivalent grade/class registered with Central Government/ Railways/ MES having registration for execution of civil works on production of definite proof from the appropriate authority. The bidders should have necessary portal enrolment with their own Digital Signature Certificate. The bidder must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class - II or Class-III.

Name of the work	E.M.D. (in Rs.) (Online/ Offline)	Cost of bid document (Online)	Class of Bidder	Period of completion (in calendar month)
"Repair and Rehabilitation of Power channel from HHEP, Burla to CHEP, Chiplima, Sambalpur, Odisha"	1,40,75,985/-	11,800/- (Rs.10,000 +18% GST)	"Super Class"	36 months

Date & Time of availability of bid documents in the portal	:	From 11:00 Hrs. of Dt.04.05.26 to 12:00 Hrs. of dt.02.06.2026
Last date of submission of Pre-bid queries	:	Upto Dt.13.05.2026 (01:00 PM)
Pre-Bid meeting	:	Dt. 18.05.2026 at 11.30 AM, OHPC Conference Hall, BBSR through VC
Pre-Bid Compliance	:	Dt.25.05.2026
Last date & Time of submission of bids	:	Upto 12:00 Hrs. of Dt.02.06.2026
Date of Opening of the Technical Bid	:	Dt.03.06.2026 at 11:30 AM

Further details can be availed from the e-procurement portal **https://tendersodisha.gov.in.**

C & P Head

OIPR - 4001/4088/1/26-27/0001

Government of Karnataka

Department of Collegiate and Technical Education
NO. 1, Unnatha Shikshana Soudha, Sheshadri Road, Bengaluru – 560 001
Phone: 080-22223906, email: dce.tenders2017@gmail.com

Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)
Karnataka Higher Education Transformation (KHET) Project

The Department of Collegiate and Technical Education (DCTE), Government of Karnataka, with support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), is implementing the **Karnataka Higher Education Transformation (KHET)** Project to strengthen higher education, enhance employability, and promote industry-aligned skills and innovation.

DCTE invites eligible consulting firms to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) for: **CS-01: Project Management Consulting Firm**

The consulting firm will support project implementation in areas including planning, procurement, contract management, financial management, monitoring & evaluation, safeguards, and institutional capacity building.

Submission: EOIs must be submitted online through the ADB Consulting Services Recruitment Notice (CSRN) portal: **http://csrn.adb.org.**

Deadline for Submission: 13 May 2026.

Note: Hard copy submissions will not be accepted. Detailed scope of work is available in the EOI document.

Sd/-
Project Director, KHET, Bengaluru, Karnataka

DIPR/CP/406/Zen/2026-27

"IT'S PURE CINEMA WATCHING VAIBHAV SOORYAVANSHI BAT. THE WAY HE APPROACHES EVERY BOWLER WITH A FEARLESS MINDSET IS REMARKABLE. HE WATCHES THE BALL AND BACKS HIMSELF TO STRIKE IT. EVEN WHEN OPPONENTS KNOW HE WILL ATTACK, THEY STRUGGLE TO CONTAIN HIM."
—Cheteshwar Pujara | Ex-India batter

KLAASEN'S CLASS ACT

SRH Batter, Aided By Head And Abhishek, Makes Easy Work Of 244-Run Chase; Rickelton's Ton In Vain

KK Choudhary

POWER PLAY: SRH's Heinrich Klaasen plays a switch hit on Wednesday

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: On a bowlers' graveyard at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai Indians might have seen their chances of making it to the playoffs buried for good. For a while, after MI raced away to 243/5, riding on opener Ryan Rickelton's blistering 123 not out off just 55 balls on Wednesday night, they would have hoped to stop Sunrisers Hyderabad and score a win that would've kept them alive in the tournament. However, MI still went down by six wickets as a rampaging Sunrisers batting lineup chased down the target in just 18.4 overs.

SRH's charge was predictable in method, yet staggering for its savagery. Exploding in signature style for SRH, 'Travi-Shek' provided a perfect start. Head, dropped a couple of times by Naman Dhir, shook off his below-par form to smash his first half-century (76; 30b, 4x4, 8x6) of the season. With Abhishek Sharma (45 off 24 balls, 4x4, 3x6) firing away at will too, the deadly left-handed added 129 in merely 52 balls for the opening wicket. However, a twin strike by spinner Allah Ghazanfar in the ninth over brought MI back in the match for a brief period.

However, there was to be another twist in the tale. Using his blade like a sledgehammer, Heinrich Klaasen then blasted 65 not out off just 30 balls, in an inning which included seven fours and four sixes, to take SRH home comfortably. Taking over complete charge of the chase, Klaasen added 80 in 40 balls for the fourth wicket with allrounder Nitish Reddy (21 off 17 balls), and then 36* in just 14 balls for the fifth wicket with Salil Arora (30 not out, 11b, 2x4, 3x6) to help the Sunrisers to their fifth win on the trot. Placed third, SRH, who scored their sixth win overall, have now considerably enhanced their playoff chances. On the other hand, MI, languishing at ninth spot, look almost out of the race.

Looking far, far below his best, MI's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah not only finished wicketless but ended up conceding 54 in four overs, with even 23-year-old Salil Arora carting him for a six in his last over. Bumrah has now taken just two wickets in eight matches. Ghazanfar finished with 2/51 in four overs while Trent Boult conceded 0-41 in three overs and Ashwani Kumar went for 41 in two. Curiously, MI didn't give a single over to allrounder Shardul Thakur, despite bringing him on as an 'Impact Player.'

Earlier, returning to the XI after replacing the injured Quinton de Kock at the last minute, Ryan Rickelton unleashed a blistering 44-ball century, the fastest-ever for MI. Rickelton's scintillating knock (10x4, 8x6) is now the highest individual score for MI in IPL history.

Rickelton's blazing innings and sparkling cameos by skipper Hardik Pandya (31 off 15 balls, 2x4, 2x6) and English allrounder Will Jacks (46 off 22 balls, 5x4, 3x6), who was playing his first game of the season, gave MI what appeared to be a decent total.

Rickelton was told he would be in the playing XI just a couple of hours before MI's must-win match after de Kock injured his wrist. The 29-year-old, with his parents applauding from the stands, tore into the Sunrisers' bowlers. Unfortunately, it wouldn't come in a winning cause.

425 Runs made by Abhishek Sharma at an average of 53.12 to become the top run-scorer in this IPL.

76 Travis Head has registered his highest score vs MI in the IPL. His previous best was 62 in Hyderabad on March 27, 2024. His second fifty vs MI is his ninth in the IPL.

SCOREBOARD

MI: W Jacks c Kishan b Reddy 46, R Rickelton not out 123, S Yadav c Abhishek b Malinga 5, N Dhir c Dubey b Hinge 22, H Pandya c Klaasen b Hussain 31, T Varma c Klaasen b Hinge 7, Robin Minz not out 1; **Extras: (lb1, w7) 8; Total: (5 wkts, 20 overs) 243; FoW:** 1-93, 2-110, 3-165, 4-221, 5-232; **Bowling:** Cummins 4-0-39-0, Hinge 4-0-54-2, Malinga 4-0-29-1, Dubey 3-0-50-0, Hussain 3-0-39-1, Reddy 2-0-31-1.

SRH: A Sharma c Boult b Ghazanfar 45, T Head c Jacks b Pandya 76, I Kishan b Ghazanfar 0, H Klaasen not out 65, N Reddy c S Yadav b Boult 21, S Arora not out 30; **Extras: (lb4, w8) 12; Total: (4 wkts, 18.4 overs) 249, FoW:** 1-129, 2-129, 3-133, 4-213; **Bowling:** Boult 4-0-41-1, Bumrah 4-0-54-0, Jacks 1-0-19-0, Ghazanfar 4-0-51-2, Ashwani 2-0-41-0, Pandya 3.4-0-39-1

Result: SRH won by six wickets.

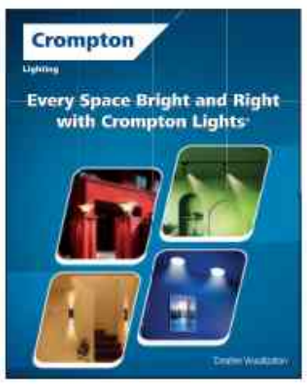
243-5 Mumbai Indians have recorded their second highest score vs SRH in the IPL behind the 246/5 in Hyderabad on March 27, 2024.

123 Rickelton's unbeaten knock is his career-best score in T20. His previous best was 113* off 60 balls for MI Cape Town vs Joburg Super Kings in Johannesburg on Jan 10, 2026.

1 Rickelton has set a record for the highest individual innings for MI in the IPL, bettering the 114* by Sanath Jayasuriya vs CSK in Mumbai on May 14, 2008.

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
PBKS	8	6	1	1	1.043	13
RCB	8	6	2	0	1.919	12
SRH	9	6	3	0	0.832	12
RR	9	6	3	0	0.617	12
GT	8	4	4	0	-0.475	8
CSK	8	3	5	0	-0.121	6
DC	8	3	5	0	-1.060	6
KKR	8	2	5	1	-0.751	5
MI	8	2	6	0	-0.784	4
LSG	8	2	6	0	-1.106	4



Middle-order woes plague Gujarat Titans

Sabu.Cherian@timesofindia.com

Ahmedabad: Six days after Royal Challengers Bengaluru chased down 206 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Gujarat Titans face the defending champions again, this time at the Narendra Modi Stadium on Thursday, still looking for answers to familiar problems.

GT have four wins and four losses from eight games but their mid-table position does not fully hide the imbalance in their campaign. Their top three — Shubman Gill, B Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler — remain their main source of runs. Sai's century in Bengaluru and the stand with Gill gave GT 205/3, but even that was not enough as RCB won by five wickets with seven balls to spare.

That result underlined the pressure on GT's middle order. Washington Sundar has offered some stability, while Jason Holder has been used to add depth, but the finishing roles have not yet settled. Against an RCB attack led by Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood, GT can ill afford another innings built almost entirely around the top order.

RCB arrive in stronger shape, with six wins from eight matches and momentum from a nine-wicket win over Delhi Capitals. In that game, Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar shared seven wickets as Delhi were bowled out for 75. If the pair remove Gill, Sudharsan or Buttler early, GT's middle order will face its toughest test yet.

The other concern for the Titans is their bowling after the Powerplay. Mohammed Siraj and Kagiso Rabada have often given them strong starts but GT have struggled to control the middle and death overs.

RCB's batting has been more flexible. Virat Kohli, Jacob Bethell and Devdutt Padikkal give them options at the top, while Rajat Patidar, Jitesh Sharma, Tim David and Krunal Pandya strengthen the middle order.

WEATHER 33°C

86.4 Virat Kohli's average while scoring 432 runs, including a hundred and four fifties, in seven innings — the highest among batters with 200+ runs vs GT in the IPL.

2 hundreds scored by GT players vs RCB. Shubman Gill's 104* on May 21, 2023 and 100 by Sai Sudharsan on April 24, 2026. Both knocks came in Bengaluru.

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

It was a blunder not to send Bangladesh for T20 WC: Shakib

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Former Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan has hit out at his country's then-interim government for the team's absence from the 2026 T20 World Cup, calling the decision a "blunder" and a major setback for the cricket-crazy nation.

Bangladesh boycotted the tournament held in India and Sri Lanka earlier this year amid diplomatic tensions over the omission of pacer Mustafizur Rahman from Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL-2026 squad. The fallout saw the team withdraw from the global event, a move Shakib believes hurt both players and fans.

"It was a big loss for Bangladesh cricket," Shakib said on the sidelines of the EUT20 Belgium jersey launch in Mumbai on Wednesday. "We are a cricket-loving country. Our people love watching us in World Cups. Not participating was a massive miss. I think it was a blunder from the government. These tournaments define generations. Players dream of performing on that stage, and fans live those moments with them. Taking that away affects the entire ecosystem," he said.

Despite the controversy, Shakib struck an optimistic note about the future of Bangladesh cricket, especially with former teammate Tamim Iqbal stepping into an administrative role. "If he takes over as president, he can bring in a long-term vision. Bangladesh cricket will benefit," Shakib said.

Zaheer happy to see bowlers shine in IPL

Gaurav.Gupta@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Former India pace spearhead Zaheer Khan is delighted that bowlers have begun to claw their way back in IPL-2026. "I'm very happy to see bowlers coming back in the IPL," Zaheer said on the sidelines of the EUT20 Belgium jersey launch on Wednesday. "You've seen low scores, 155 being defended, teams bowled out for 70-odd. It shows that aggression and the right approach are working."

At the centre of this resurgence is Bhuvneshwar Kumar, whose consistency for RCB has rekindled talk of a comeback for India. Zaheer believes the veteran still has plenty to offer. "It's great to see Bhuvi delivering like this. I'm sure he's thinking along those lines. The IPL has always been a platform to push for national selection and he's making a strong statement," Zaheer noted.

On Jasprit Bumrah's lean run — just two wickets in seven games — Zaheer urged patience. "Every bowler goes through phases like this. It doesn't define you. Bumrah is aware of it and with games left, he can still turn it around," he said.

Zaheer also expressed optimism about young quicks, particularly LSG's Mohsin Khan and Prince Yadav. "Mohsin has had a stop-start run because of injuries. The skill is there, but he needs to stay fit and play consistently. Prince, on the other hand, has put in the hard yards and is reaping the rewards. It's exciting to see such talent coming through."

Riyan caught vaping on live TV, Royals face fresh scrutiny

Mandakini.Shalya
@timesofindia.com

Screengrab of Riyan allegedly vaping during the match

Jaipur: Rajasthan Royals are once again under the scanner for a disciplinary lapse, just days after their team manager was pulled up for using a mobile phone in the dugout. This time, captain Riyan Parag has found himself in the middle of a fresh controversy after television cameras caught him apparently vaping inside the team dressing room during Tuesday night's clash against Punjab Kings in New Chandigarh.

The moment came in the 16th over of the second innings while Rajasthan were chasing a target of 223. As the broadcast focused on the dressing room for reaction shots, Riyan was seen taking a puff from what looked like an e-cigarette. Teammates Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel were visible in the vicinity.

Though Royals went on to secure a six-wicket victory, the result was quickly overshadowed by intense chatter surrounding their captain's off-field conduct.

India's Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019 bans the production, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of vapes, with violations carrying penalties that can include fines and, in some cases, imprisonment of up to six months for storage-related offences. While personal use in private spaces rarely leads to prosecution, the highly public setting of a live IPL broadcast has amplified the issue.

BCCI officials are understood to be examining the footage. Insiders say the matter is likely to be dealt with under the IPL code of conduct. "There is no defined punishment in the IPL code of conduct. The BCCI will be seeking legal opinion," a source said.

Royals sources said, "Until now there is no communication from the BCCI. Coach Kumar Sangakkara spoke with Riyan on the matter after the match."

From bench to finishing line, Dubey makes the wait worthwhile

Hindol.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Chandigarh: Shubham Dubey has spent most of his cricketing life waiting. Waiting for recognition, for opportunity, for a moment that would demand everything he has quietly built over the years. On Tuesday night, as Rajasthan Royals were drifting towards defeat against an unbeaten Punjab Kings side here, that moment finally arrived. Dubey seized it with both hands.

Walking in as an 'impact substitute' at No. 6, ahead of established names like Ravindra Jadeja and Dasun Shanaka, the 31-year-old Dubey was handed a situation that could easily have swallowed him.

Rajasthan Royals still needed 72 off 36 balls, the chase slipping and the pressure mounting. But Dubey didn't just hold his nerve. He flipped the game on its head.

Dubey finished unbeaten on 31 off just 12 balls, striking at 258.33, and added 77 in just 32 balls with Donovan Ferreira to script a six-wicket win. What had looked like a faltering chase turned into a statement win, ending Punjab's unbeaten run.

Born in Yavatmal in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, Dubey's beginnings were modest. A decade ago, he didn't have the means to afford basic cricket gear. His father, Badriprasad Dubey, ran a *paan* stall in Nagpur and the family scraped through with limited means.

The breakthrough came through the faith of his mentor, the late Sudeep Jaiswal, who backed him when few others did. Jaiswal bought him his first proper cricket kit — a new bat, gloves and other essentials that would allow Dubey to compete on equal footing. More importantly, he helped him find a pathway into the Vidarbha team.

SHUBHAM DUBEY IN T20s

	M	NO	Runs	HS	Ave	50	SR	6s
Overall	41	15	808	58*	38.5	2	156.6	50
In wins	22	9	486	58*	54	2	163.6	30
In IPL	15	7	189	34*	31.5	0	175	12
In wins	4	3	58	31*	-	0	200	2

From there, Dubey carved his reputation in the less-celebrated corners of Indian cricket. Tournaments like the Bapuna Cup in Vidarbha became his proving ground, where he developed into a power-hitter capable of shifting momentum in a matter of overs. The wider recognition came during the 2023-24 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. Dubey piled up 221 runs at an average of 73.66, striking at 187.28. These were numbers too compelling to ignore for the IPL scouts.

Rajasthan Royals responded by investing Rs 5.8 crore in him ahead of IPL-2024. But the transition wasn't seamless. He managed just 33 runs in four games, though his strike-rate of 173.68 hinted at his intent. RR released him but bought him back, this time for Rs 80 lakh.

"Dubey, coming in as an impact player, it's one of the hardest things to do, because you don't know if you're playing or not. So mentally, he was exceptionally skilful. The way he was able to keep his focus and go in the middle and bring the game in our favour was outstanding," said Kumar Sangakkara, Rajasthan's head coach and director of cricket.

Sangakkara pointed out that Rajasthan Royals' strength lies in the depth of their batting, with Dubey firmly part of that core. "The focus is a lot on Vaibhav (Sooryavanshi). But at the same time, when I look at my side and I run through my batters, there's Dhruv (Jurel), Yash (Yashasvi Jaiswal), Riyan (Parag), Donovan Ferreira and now someone like Dubey," Sangakkara said.

India men finish 2nd in Gp A

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Losing two close matches cost India the top spot in Group A as they lost 2-3 to China in the Thomas Cup in Horsens, Denmark on Wednesday.

Despite the defeat in their final round-robin clash and finishing second in the group, India qualified for the quarterfinals. The quarterfinals draw will be made after the last group match.

THOMAS CUP

While HS Prannoy and Ayush Shetty won, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty lost from a winning position and Lakshya Sen suffered a three-game loss.

The second doubles pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and MR Arjun failed to trouble the Chinese and lost to He Ji Ting and Ren Xian Yu 17-21, 13-21.

Lakshya recovered after losing the first but slumped again in the third to lose 19-21, 21-8, 12-21 to Li Shi Feng. Lakshya said that his opponent controlled the net in the third game. Satwik-Chirag were up 18-12 in the decider before they lost to Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang 13-21, 21-13, 24-26.

With India trailing 0-2, Ayush rallied to defeat Weng Hong Yang 17-21, 21-13, 21-15. "Enjoyed winning a point for the team. Our goal was to win the contest but, we lost two close games," said Shetty.

"My plan was to play an attacking game. But there are some areas I need to work on. We believe we can go all the way. The josh is high in the team," Ayush added.

Prannoy looked sharp in his 20-22, 21-19, 21-11 victory against Lu Guang Zu.

Lakshya and Ayush's coach-cum-mentor U Vimal Kumar believes India can go all the way. "This is a great opportunity to reset and come back stronger. If our three singles players click together, and Satwik-Chirag deliver, we have every chance," said Vimal.

Result (men): India lost to China 2-3 (Lakshya lost to Li Shi 19-21, 21-8, 12-21; Satwiksairaj/Chirag lost to Liang Kang/Wang Chang 13-21, 21-13, 24-26; Ayush bt Weng Yang 17-21, 21-13, 21-15; Hariharan/Arjun lost to He Ji/Ren Yu 17-21, 13-21; Prannoy bt Lu Guang Zu 20-22, 21-19, 21-11).

Vijay Kumar, Indian golf's extraordinary heavyweight

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Vijay Kumar won the 2002 Indian Open and was a four-time Order of Merit champion

New Delhi: Vijay Kumar was becoming a familiar name in sports newsrooms in the latter half of the 1990s, though few really knew him. A colleague from Lucknow would often recount how the golfer's father, a Railways batman of sorts attached to his own father, ferried young Vijay to school on a bicycle, perched on a small saddle fixed to the central bar.

1968-2026

It was a telling image from the early days of professional golf in India, where Vijay Kumar reigned supreme. He topped the Order of Merit for four straight years between 1995 and 2000, dominating a fiercely competitive field that included pioneers like Ali Sher and Rohtas Singh and rising stars such as Daniel Chopra, Arjun Atwal and Jeev Milkha Singh (then Chiranjeev). Lucknow's Vijay was an understated heavyweight.

He lived and died in Martinpurva, an urban village bordering the Lucknow Golf Club, once the La Martiniere Golf Club, nestled beside the Chief Minister's residence. As his appearances dwindled over the past 15 years, he embraced anonymity, running the pro shop and occasionally coaching. Martinpurva itself sits almost within driving distance of the course, its residents often working as greenkeepers, ground staff or caddies. It is the classic Indian caddie-to-pro story: boys from modest backgrounds growing up on the course, learning every blade of grass before picking up discarded clubs and turning pro.

Vijay epitomised the truest sense of a "professional golfer", one who played for a living. Rashid Khan would later call such players "no-option golfers". "Vijay uncle and many like him were always in the leader groups because there was no option. He had to win to run his home. We all do," Rashid said.

Pappan, a Delhi Golf Club regular, echoed that sentiment: "Look closely at the leaderboard of big tournaments in our time, you'd find us near the top. We needed to be there."

"Bahaar kyaa jaana, yahan jeet toh rehen hain…" Vijay would shrug when asked why he rarely ventured abroad despite his domestic dominance. Whether it was inhibition born of class or simple contentment, he deflected deeper questions with a casual, *'Amaa yaar, chai pilao…"*

He was warm but famously reserved. A visit to Martinpurva in 2002, after his Indian Open triumph, yielded little beyond monosyllabic replies. Yet within his peer group across the 1990s and 2000s, he was an unspoken alpha—travelling in unreserved train compartments, sharing cramped accommodation, living golf as work.

One memory stands out. Widely tipped to win the 1998 Indian Open, he withdrew due to a wrist injury. Four years later, as he ambled up the 18th at Delhi Golf Club to seal that long-awaited win, his community walked with him, almost claiming the moment as their own.

At 57, Vijay still carried an ageless presence—heavyset yet sprightly when he chose to be. He handled the club with surprising delicacy, as though it were weightless.

Pappan remembers him as "diler"—gutsy. "He didn't know pressure," he said, recalling a playoff at Noida Golf Course around 1999 or 2000. As tension mounted, Vijay simply spotted a familiar face, asked for tobacco, and grinned.

"Pressure? Kya pressure… *abhi toh mazaa shuru hua hai…*"

SNAP SHOTS

Sinner books semis spot

Jannik Sinner ended the inspired run of teen home favourite Rafael Jodar with a 6-2, 7-6 (7/0) victory at the Madrid Open on Wednesday to complete his set of semi-finals reached at all nine Masters 1000 tournaments. Lucky loser Anastasia Potapova reached the first WTA 1000 semifinal of her career with a hard-fought 6-1, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 performance against former world number one Karolina Pliskova. Hailey Baptiste ended Aryna Sabalenka's 15-match winning streak, with a 2-6, 6-2, 7-6(6) win.

Indian lifters shine: Indian lifters continued their impressive run at the Commonwealth Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships and Universal Cup, fetching a gold and three silver medals in Apia, Samoa on Wednesday. Bellana Harika fetched the lone gold in the 69kg weight class with a total effort of 197kg (86kg+111kg). Karangi Tharangini 179kg (79kg+100kg) and Bhumika Mohite 195kg (109kg+86kg) won the silver medals in the 63kg events. In the Universal Cup, Abhishek Nipane clinched the 88kg silver with a total effort of 324kg (140kg+184kg).

India women down Ukraine: India's women's table tennis team edged Ukraine 3-2 to keep their ITTF World Team Championships Finals qualification hopes on track in London on Wednesday. The victory also placed them in a strong position to top Group 6. In the men's section India will take on Slovakia.

FIFA increases financial distribution: FIFA will increase payments to teams taking part in the 2026 World Cup to almost $900 million, world soccer's governing body said, citing the commercial success of its expanded flagship men's tournament. The FIFA Council, meeting in Vancouver ahead of the 76th FIFA Congress, approved a 15% increase in the resources to be distributed to all 48 participating member associations.

New anti-racism rule: World Cup players who cover their mouths during confrontations with opponents will face a red card as part of a new initiative aimed at combating racism, world governing body FIFA said on Tuesday. In a statement following a meeting of the International Football Association Board in Vancouver, FIFA confirmed that the rule was one of two law changes that would be introduced at this year's World Cup.

NINE-GOAL THRILLER

Holders PSG Edge Bayern 5-4 in Record-Breaking Semis

Paris: Defending champions Paris St Germain battled past visitors Bayern Munich 5-4 in a pulsating Champions League semifinal first leg on Tuesday that had a record number of goals at this stage of the competition. In a match that will go down as a classic, PSG came from a goal down to lead 5-2 with two goals from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Ousmane Dembele before Bayern struck twice in three minutes just before the hour to improve their chances for next week's return leg in Munich.

The match pitted the most attacking Champions League teams of the season against each other and it quickly lived up to its billing with

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

a relentless pace and with Bayern coach Vincent Kompany in the stands, serving out a suspension, and his assistant Aaron Danks in the dugout. "We're really happy, and I think we deserved to win, but we also deserved a draw, and we would have even deserved to lose, because this game was that incredible," said PSG coach Luis Enrique.

Harry Kane converted a 17th-minute penalty to beat PSG goalkeeper Matvei Safonov, and become the first English player to net in six successive Champions League fixtures. The England captain then delivered a well-timed pass for Michael Olise but his close-range shot was cleared off the line. The hosts should have levelled

Reuters

ONE FOR THE AGES: Bayern Munich's Dayot Upamecano scores their third goal

when Dembele broke through but his finish flew well wide in the 23rd, but Kvaratskhelia did find the net with a trademark move and a low shot after cutting into the box.

Bayern hit the post following a solo run by Olise and his deflected pass, but it was PSG who scored again in the 33rd with Joao Neves' glancing header. There was plenty of drama left in the first half with Olise making amends for his earlier miss and drawing Bayern level with a 41st-minute shot after being given far too much space around the box.

PSG were then awarded a stoppage-time penalty and Dembele powered his spot kick past Manuel Neuer to put them back in front.

DOUBLE STRIKE

PSG picked up where they left off after halftime and carved out a two-goal lead when Kvaratskhelia drilled in a 56th-minute effort and the French side struck again before Bayern had any time to recover, this time Dembele beating Neuer once more with a low drive that went in off the post two minutes later. Bayern refused to buckle and fought back with two goals in a three-minute span from Dayot Upamecano and Luis Diaz.

PSG's Senny Mayulu rattled the woodwork in the 86th minute as both sides kept up the pace until the final whistle. **Result:** PSG 5 (Kvaratskhelia 24, 56; Neves 33, Dembele 45+5, 58) bt Bayern Munich 4 (Kane 17, Olise 41, Upamecano 65, Diaz 68). REUTERS

Kothari bags back-to-back titles

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Sourav Kothari, who fired in fits and starts right through his campaign, reserved his best for the last. The reigning champion came up with a brilliant effort in the title clash

WORLD BILLIARDS

against fellow Indian and the in-form Pankaj Advani to retain his IBSF World Billiards Championship title in Carlow, Ireland on Tuesday. The bespectacled Kolkata cueist outclassed the 19-time champion with a 1133-477 verdict in the three-hour final.

After the initial blues, the 41-year-old Kothari came up with a barrage of breaks to floor Advani. He had stupendous runs of 485, 121, 90, 241 and an unfinished 155. When the bell went off, Advani walked across and gave him a congratulatory hug. Kothari looked heavenwards and gestured: "This one was for you, Dad." It was a tribute to his father former player and coach Manoj Kothari, who passed away earlier this year. "It feels incredible to win the world title, and to defend it is even more special," said Kothari.

Result (Final): Sourav Kothari (Ind) 1133 (485,121, 90, 241, 155unf.) bt Pankaj Advani (Ind) 477 (141, 64, 119).

Yelwal does the trick for FUCC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Leg-spinner Ronak Yelwal claimed a hat-trick, returning figures of 4 for 5 to power Friends Union CC (FUCC) to a five-wicket win over Social Cricketers in the KSCA G Kasturirangan memorial trophy T20 tournament here on Wednesday.

Opting to bat, Social were struggling at 105/5 when Yelwal wreaked havoc in the 14th over, accounting for four wickets in the maiden over. Social lost five wickets without adding a run. In reply, FUCC stuttered a bit, but skipper Sidharth Akhil anchored the chase with a 28-ball 41.

Brief scores: Social Cricketers: 105 in 14.4 overs (Lochan Gowda 27; Saideep H J 2-18, Dhruv Vasu 2-8, Ronak Yelwal 4-5) lost to **FUCC (1): 109/5 in 14.4 overs** (Sidharth Akhil 41; Anmol Mathur 2-24). **Vijaya CC, Malur: 142/5 in 20 overs** (Vijay KA 54) lost to **Palar SC, Kolar: 143/1 in 13.3 overs** (Ritesh Bhatkal 69, Chiranth D 30 n.o, Sudhanwa Kulkarni 40 n.o). **South End SC: 156/6 in 16 overs** (Shashank BK 41, Stalin Hoover 32, Yathish 30; Swaroop 3-22, Nikhil 2-16) bt **Young Lions Club: 145/9 in 16 overs** (Dheeraj Yadav 40, Swaroop 27; Manu N 3-29, Vikas Gowda 3-20). (Reduced to 16 overs per side due to overnight rain) **Minerva CC: 181/7 in 20 overs** (Anish KN 66, Arush Jain 44; Darshan MB 3-35, Naga Santhosh 2-25) lost to **Mount Joy CC: 182/9 in 20 overs** (Amogh Shetty 49; Kushal Gouda 4-25). **The Bangalore Cricketers: 164/6 in 20 overs** (Saurav Samant 82; Deepak Devadiga 3-18) lost to **Bangalore United CC (1): 169/4 in 18.2 overs** (Akash Shetty 44, Shashindra K 31, Lavish Kaushal 32 n.o.; Abhiraj HR 2-31). **Herons CC: 191/6 in 20 overs** (Prajwal Pavan 43, Sanjay Ashwin 42, Dheeraj Mohan 45 n.o; Santhosh S 2-41, Tejas KA 2-36) lost to **Rajajinagar Cricketers: 191/7 in 19.2 overs** (Sireesh Balgaar 32, Raghuveer 31; Jayanth MR 2-36, Jullian Edward 3-22) via VJD method (match hit by rain) **Cambridge CC: 229/4 in 20 overs** (Toufeeq S 38, Suhas R 85, Shubhang Hegde 90; Nagaraj Hegde 2-52) bt **Whirlwind Cricketers: 146/6 in 20 overs** (Pranav Raj 45, Banesh SP 32; Eesa Puthige 2-19). **Jayanagar Cricketers: 191/8 in 20 overs** (S Chaitanya 66, Sourab Muttur 50, Suhas Purushotham 29 n.o; Vivek Naik 2-31, Pranesh Desai 2-33, Rohan Yareshmi 2-26) bt **Dooravani Cricketers (1): 169/7 in 20 overs** (Aarav Shriyan 45, Rohan 32, Vineeth B 32 n.o; Suhas 2-33, Avinash D 2-20).

CRICKET

BTC takes concrete step towards Kunigal shift

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The Bangalore Turf Club has taken a confirmatory step towards relocating from its current premises on Race Course Road here to Kunigal, Tumakuru, within the next two years. Some of the officials have already visited the proposed land as well. The estimated relocation cost is expected to be between Rs 350 crore and Rs 500 crore, while the course is set to be designed by the Jockey Club in England on a pro bono basis. All the plans are, however, at a preliminary stage.

The Karnataka govt and BTC have been at loggerheads since 2010,

HORSE RACING

when the Karnataka High Court asked for the land to be vacated. The latest developments suggest that the BTC, which could receive some financial support from the govt to build the facility, is making plans for a new life beyond the stretches in the heart of the city.

"This (Kunigal) is the land where URBB (United Racing & Bloodstock Breeders) was conducting its stud farm operations. Out of that, the govt is giving us 110 acres plus another eight acres of the adjoining land," L Shivashankar, BTC chairman and senior steward, told reporters at a press conference here on Wednesday. However, he added that completing a new course in the stipulated two-year time may be difficult. "But when we show our bona fides, the govt at that time will definitely grant us more time to complete."

Informal discussions have already transpired between the Jockey Club and BTC officials. "They said they're going to do it pro bono — the design of the racecourse. They would like to come and visit the track once, do the contour mapping, and based on the same design, the lay of the land," said Uday Eswaran, a steward and a former BTC chairman.

SUMMER DERBY ON JULY 12

Meanwhile, the Bangalore Summer Meeting, which starts on May 1 and concludes on July 31, comes as a relief for BTC, which was recently declared glanders-free. The season will be spread across 28 race days, primarily over the weekend.

It has a total prize money of Rs 21.53 crore, including the four classic races that have a guaranteed prize money of Rs 7. 25 crore. The blue-riband event — Bangalore Summer Derby — scheduled for July 12 has a total prize purse of Rs 5 crore. Outstation trainers are expected to bring horses to BTC by the end of next week after clearing the glanders tests as per the protocols.

Nikhil powers Beagles past Bharath SU

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Beagles Basketball Club secured a 76-57 win over Bharath SU in the U-13 boys' Super League stage of the State sub-junior basketball championship for the BS Narayan Memorial Trophy here on Wednesday.

Beagles' coordination and attacking approach helped them gain a strong lead. The

BASKETBALL

match started as a close contest, with both teams vying for the lead, with just a couple of points separating them. This was evident at the end of the first quarter, where the score stood at 14-13. Bharath SU put up strong resistance, collecting crucial rebounds and displaying solid teamwork, which ensured the game remained competitive in the early stages.

Syed Asif

TUSSLE: Vanguards' Pranav V (R) and Agasthya M of Yelahanka New Town BC vie for the ball

As halftime approached, Beagles found their rhythm, tightening up defensively with timely interceptions and crucial rebounds. Their passing also became sharper and more deliberate, helping them create better scoring opportunities. By the end of the third quarter, they had stretched their lead to 54-36, with Nikhil leading the charge with 21 points.

Results: League Stage: Boys: Bangalore Vanguards 65 (Chayank 19, Takshak 18) bt Yelahanka New Town BC 58 (Svar Nagarjuna 19, Daiwik Singh 11) HT: 32-30; Beagles BC 76 (Nikhil 21, Advaith 13, Dishanth 13) bt Bharath SU 57 (Hitesh 15, Ronit 10) HT: 39-21; MNK Rao Park BC 39 (Vansh 10) bt Vivek's SC 37 (Kiyansh 17) HT: 31-14. **Girls:** MCHS 65 (Kannira 31, Swarali 18) bt PPC 31 (Anishka 12) HT: 35-18; Bangalore Vanguards 65 (Aarushi 32, Aradhana 10) bt Mandya 34 (Tejaswini 14) HT: 28-14; Young Orion's SC 34 (Aaeesha 11, Anushika 10) bt Hebbal BC 28 (Shruthi 18) HT: 20-10; Mounts Club 63 (Kenisha 23, Joana 10, Niya 10) bt Hoop 7 BC 35 (Dhanyashree 23) HT: 34-15. —**Jai Khosla**

NADA suspends Gill and Chelsi

New Delhi: Indian Open Race Walk champion Sahil Gill and Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships silver medallist, Chelsi have been provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for testing positive for performance-enhancing substances, reports **Sabi Hussain**. Both failed tests for Stanozolol, widely misused for enhancing muscle mass and performance, and which is strictly prohibited at all times under global anti-doping rules. Roller sports athlete Sameeya Mistry and Greco-Roman wrestler Vikrant Singh Bhoriya (97kg) were also suspended. TNN

RWF emerge champs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Rail Wheel Factory (RWF) clinched the KSCA Group II-I Division league title, led by Jasper EJ's unbeaten 93 and a strong bowling unit. In the final, RWF defeated Canara Bank by 50 runs. RWF batted first at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium here and piled up 182/7 in 20 overs, with Jasper on a 51-ball 93 (7x4; 5x6). Akshay CK supported him well with a crucial 43.

KSCA TOURNEY

In reply, Canara Bank fell to a combination of spin and pace, getting bowled out for 132 in 19.1 overs. Krishav Somasundar scored a lone half-century (56) for the bankmen. For the winners, Syed Moinuddin returned 3 for 11, while Manvanth Kumar and Akshay claimed two wickets each.

Brief scores: RWF SA: 182/7 in 20 overs (Sagar Solanki 28, Jasper EJ 93 n.o., Akshay CK 43; Naveen MG 2-37, Lavish Kaushal 2-46) bt **Canara Bank: 132 in 19.1 overs** (Krishav Somasundar 56; Manvanth Kumar 2-17, Akshay 3-12, Syed Moinuddin 3-11).

VAIBHAV, JYOTSNA ENTER FINAL

Bengaluru: Vaibhav Rao battled past Arjun Aralgundagi 21-23, 22-20, 21-16, in the semifinals of the U-11 category in the State U-11 and U-13 badminton tournament here on Wednesday. The match was pushed to a tie-break after the players split the first two games, but Vaibhav left no room for doubt as he was in control in the third. In the corresponding girls' event, Jyotsna thwarted a spirited challenge from Yuvika for a 16-21, 21-13, 21-19 victory. In the final, she will take on Amitha, who defeated Aroushi 19-21, 21-16, 21-11 in the other last-4 match.

BADMINTON

Results: U-11: Boys: Semis: Rishik Sai (B'luru-R) bt Saathvik Reddy (B'luru-U) 21-17, 21-16; Atharva Sahoo (B'luru-R) bt Rishvanth G (B'luru-U) 21-11, 21-13; **Quarters:** Rishik bt Kushagra Parashar (B'luru-U) 21-13, 21-11; Saathvik bt Nishal P Kashyap (B'luru-U) 21-13, 21-13; Rishvanth bt Rohith S (Mys) 16-21, 21-7, 21-19; Atharva bt Lithin P (B'luru-U) 21-13, 18-21, 21-15. **U-11: Girls: Semis:** Jyotsna Vinod (B'luru-U), bt Yuvika Thamaya (Kodagu) 16-21, 21-13, 21-19; Amitha Reddy (B'luru-U) bt Aroushi Vainavi (B'luru-U) 19-21, 21-16, 21-11. **Quarters:** Jyotsna bt Additree Sikari (B'luru-U) 21-10, 21-3; Yuvika bt Shriya Aralgundagi (B'luru-U) 21-18, 21-9; Aroushi bt Shivani S (Ramanagara) 21-14, 21-13; Amitha bt Shanaya V S (Kodagu) 21-17, 21-11. **Boys: U-13: Semis:** Vaibhav Rao (B'luru-U) bt Arjun Aralgundagi (B'luru-U) 21-23, 22-20, 21-16; Rishik Boligarla (B'luru-U) bt Manibettu Adesh (B'luru-U) 19-21, 23-21, 21-8. **Quarters:** Vaibhav bt Akshaj Gatty (B'luru-U) 25-23, 21-16; Arjun bt Dhruva Chanu (B'luru-U) 21-11, 19-21, 21-8; Rishik bt Sandeep Bayar (B'luru-U) 21-9, 21-15; Manibettu bt Danvin Penta (B'luru-U) 21-18, 21-12. **Girls: U-13: Semis:** Sihi Adarsh (Hassan) bt Hanvittha KA (B'luru-R) 21-14, 21-11; Shreeya A Rao (B'luru-U) bt Stuthi S Shetty (B'luru-R) 21-18, 21-11. **Quarters:** Sihi bt Manaswini Puttuboyana (B'luru-U) 21-12, 21-9; Hanvittha bt Shaanvi PN (DK) 21-19, 21-17; Shreeya bt Hemashree K (Hassan) 21-10, 21-17; Stuthi bt Havisha R (B'luru-U) 21-14, 21-18. TNN

Singham & Pushpa's paths don't cross, Falta focuses on taped EVM

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Kolkata: Falta in South 24 Parganas woke up on the polling day with the apprehensions of a major face-off. One man moved relentlessly across the constituency, while the other stayed stationed in a single room, monitoring every activity from a distance. The much-hyped 'Singham vs Pushpa' confrontation, built over days of warnings and counter-threats, never happened.

What came instead were EVM complaints. In one instance, a tape was found stuck on the BJP candidate's name on the EVM. "Maximum complaints were from Falta. Among 32 complaints, 20 were verified. So, a repoll will be held there," Bengal CEO Manoj Agarwal said. Across Bengal, 77 complaints were received.

In the days leading up to the election, the Falta constituency had been primed for a confrontation. IPS Ajay Pal Sharma, an "encounter specialist" from UP appointed as EC's police observer, was projected as 'Singham'. Matching the rhetoric, Jahangir Khan, Trinamool Congress candidate and local political 'satrap', declared himself to be 'Pushpa'. Their near-encounters, and the charged political rhetoric had set expectations for a dramatic election day.

By 7 am, Sharma was already on the move. For the next two hours, his convoy, more than 10-vehicle strong, traversed through pockets of Falta. At intervals, security personnel stepped out, dispersing clusters of people gathering near booths, while Sharma remained glued to his phone inside the vehicle. "Sir is avoiding media glare for now. But, if any voter faces trouble, he will be there to help," said a central force personnel.

Even before Sharma's convoy rolled out, Khan had taken position. At his party office, he settled into what aides called his "control room". For over 12 hours, Khan stayed fixed between TV screens and his mobile phone, while workers streamed in and out.

"He was receiving constant feedback from workers across Falta," said an aide.

Apart from minor skirmishes, polling in Falta remained largely incident-free.

Bhowanipore votes, Didi breaks poll-day routine & Suvendu says, 'I like this fear'

Rivals Visit Same Hood But Ignore Each Other

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Bhowanipore candidates Mamata Banerjee and Suvendu Adhikari at polling booths in Kolkata, Wednesday

Kolkata: Barely 50m separated CM Mamata Banerjee and her ex-confidant and BJP challenger Suvendu Adhikari in a narrow Bhowanipore lane in Kolkata — a fleeting moment that captured a bitter, personal contest. Neither acknowledged the other nor exchanged a glance. Fifty metres said it all.

Banerjee, unbeaten in Bhowanipore since 2011, broke her polling-day routine of staying indoors until afternoon. The 71-year-old CM left her Kalighat home at 7.40am Wednesday, visited Chetla, met city mayor Firhad Hakim and headed out to inspect polling booths.

By 8am, Banerjee parked herself outside a Trinamool Congress office in Chakraberia. The setting was calm — sipping tea with party workers while declining food offered by residents. Her mood changed as she scrolled images on her phone. She alleged central forces assaulted TMC workers.

"I was awake all night," she said. "Observers and police officers brought from outside are carrying out atrocities. Our workers are being beaten up and arrested illegally. Their intention is clear — they want to rig the election."

Minutes after she entered Amrapali Heera complex, 55-year-old Adhikari arrived with central forces. A close encounter. Zero eye contact. Maximum heat. "*Ye darr mujhe acchha laga*," he said, alleging she was afraid of losing and trying to intimidate voters.

Adhikari crisscrossed the constituency from Jadu Babu's Bazaar to Park Street, tracking turnout despite rain. He said he was in touch with home minister Amit Shah and "confident of victory". Adhikari predicted a 30,000-vote win in Bhowanipore. He had defeated Banerjee by 1,956 votes in Nandigram in the previous election.

Banerjee's convoy moved through overlapping routes but avoided another face-off.

Tension flared at Mitra Institution when Adhikari met voters and TMC supporters shouted slogans. He later alleged a mob surrounded him, prompting calls for additional security. Central forces moved in, swinging batons at cars and bystanders while dispersing crowd. "They are outsiders. I called QRT," Adhikari added.

TMC's Kajari Banerjee accused him of provocation, alleging central forces "mercilessly beat" voters.

Adhikari later struck a lighter note at Jadu Babu's Bazaar, sharing a soft drink with TMC workers. "I know Bhowanipore very well... this time the constituency is voting for us," he said.

Voter turnout shows tide turning for BJP: PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: Bengal's record voter turnout over two phases of polling is the harbinger of change in the state, PM Narendra Modi said Wednesday, expressing confidence about BJP coming to office there for the first time. He predicted that NDA would also retain Assam and Puducherry and spring a few surprises in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

"The poll results on May 4 will strengthen our resolve to build a developed India and infuse new energy into the pace of development," Modi said while inaugurating the Ganga Expressway in UP's Hardoi.

The PM described voters turning out in droves again during the second phase of polling in 142 constituencies of Bengal as a reflection of elections being held in an atmosphere devoid of fear. He lauded the state's electorate for their "awareness of democratic rights".

If UDF wins, Left may not be in power in any state

▶ Continued from page 1

In Kerala, the consensus was that the UDF would win though the projections ranged from as little as 70 of the 140 seats at the bottom of the Matrize range to 90 at the top end of the Axis My India range.

The LDF was projected to end up with at best 69 seats, which would mean that the Left would for the first since 1977 not be in office in any state.

Exit polls have had a patchy record in India.

The results will be known on Monday, May 4.

Scuffles, plaints mark debut of RG Kar victim's mother

Kolkata: Grief shadowed a charged political debut. RG Kar rape-and-murder victim's mother, contesting as a BJP candidate, faced a day of tension, confrontations and duelling allegations across polling booths on Wednesday.

She began early, casting her vote with her husband around 7.20am at a booth near their home. Before stepping out, she said she prayed in her daughter's room and then to Sarada Devi. "I am fighting this battle to get justice for her and for all the women in Bengal so they can live peacefully," she said.

Her 31-year-old resident doctor daughter was raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on Aug 9, 2024. By March 2025, she and her husband were running a sustained campaign for justice. That journey led to a BJP-backed electoral bid in her home constituency.

On polling day, the mother moved across booths, urging turnout. Controversy followed. Rivals alleged she tried to influence voters standing in queues at multiple locations.

—**Poulami Roy**

VIP treatment for 104-yr-old who fought SIR and won

East Burdwan: Sheikh Ibrahim, who has cast his vote in every election since Independence, kept his date with democracy on Wednesday as well. EC had initially placed 104-year-old Ibrahim's name under adjudication on the final voters' list, because of a "discrepancy" — his name appeared as **Sk Ibrahim** on the 2002 voters' list and Ibrahim Sk on 2025 roll. After days of anxiety and uncertainty, his name eventually appeared on the first supplementary list.

The delay meant he missed EC's vote-from-home window for 85-plus citizens. Ibrahim, however, insisted he would vote. The district administration provided him with a vehicle and wheelchair so he could visit the polling booth. He was driven there and wheeled into the booth under Jamalpur assembly constituency, where he cast his vote with the support of his son, Sk Bagbul Islam.

"I prayed to Allah every day for inclusion of my name. Allah has granted my wish," Ibrahim told **TOI**.

—**Mohammad Asif**

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Luis Enrique's Paris Saint-Germain beat Bayern Munich 5-4 in an epic first leg of their Champions League semifinal, P 14

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Furnofy Cotton Hand Towels (450GSM,Set of 2)

₹ 499

Sumeet SS Kadai with glass Lid (1.4L, Induction bottom)

₹ 599

Jalore Plastic Floral Bathroom Set (3 Pcs)

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Quace Crystal Ball Galaxy Lamp

₹ 519

DesiDiya 3D Acrylic DIY LCD Writing Pad with Pen

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TIMES GLOBAL

* THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026

GEORGE CLOONEY SAYS HE RARELY WATCHES HIS OLD MOVIES AS 'THAT DOESN'T EVEN LOOK LIKE ME ANYMORE'

THEY CAN KEEP THEIR HEAVEN. WHEN I DIE, I'D SOONER GO TO MIDDLE EARTH.
— GEORGE R.R. MARTIN

ACTOR SAM NEILL REVEALS HE IS CANCER-FREE AFTER 5 YRS OF LIVING WITH LYMPHOMA, THANKS TO GENETIC THERAPY

Trump asks aides to prepare for naval siege lasting months

US Prez Tells Axios He Rejected Iran Offer To Reopen Hormuz

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: US President Donald Trump has directed aides to prepare for a prolonged US naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, potentially lasting months, after firing off a 4am social media post asking Iran to "better get smart soon" and warning, "No More Mr Nice Guy."

While the bizarre post — showing a machine-gun-wielding Trump in aviator shades against a war backdrop — suggested more punitive military strikes in the offing, US policy, while escalatory in rhetoric, appears increasingly anchored in a grinding, open-ended strategy that stops short of all-out conflict. Trump told Axios over phone that he had rejected a recent proposal from Iran to reopen the strait but that would have delayed talks on the nuclear issue until later.

Behind the scenes, the administration is indicating that the US goal is to choke Iran's oil exports, squeeze its economy, and force concessions without triggering a wider regional war.

The blockade is already reshaping global energy flows. Shipping traffic through Hormuz has dropped to its lowest levels since the conflict began, disrupting a corridor that normally carries roughly a fifth of the world's oil. The impact has been swift and unforgiving: US gasoline prices have surged to a record average of $4.23 per gallon, up more than 40% since late Feb, according to the American Automobile Association. For American drivers, the war is no longer an abstraction, it is pain at the pump. Yet the impact is far more acute abroad than in a country that can print a currency that the world buys into.

India, one of the largest crude importers, has scrambled to diversify supplies, leaning more heavily on shipments from Russia and the US while drawing down strategic reserves, with price hikes imminent after the election results. Refiners in Japan and South Korea are paying steep premiums for alternative cargoes, while China has quietly increased overland imports and tapped state stockpiles to cushion the blow.

In Washington, the administration insists the strategy is working. "Thanks to the blockade, Iran is broke," one Trump ally said, echoing a broader argument that sustained economic pressure will succeed where diplomacy has failed. Some go further, predicting imminent collapse of Iran's oil infrastructure — a claim that analysts view as more rhetorical than realistic.

Privately, officials concede the path forward is murkier. There is little expectation of a near-term nuclear agreement, but also limited appetite for escalation. The result is a policy that risks becoming its own end state: an indefinite blockade with no clear off-ramp.

Critics say that is precisely the problem. "Memes are all Trump has left in the Middle East," one such critic wrote on X, capturing a growing chorus of frustration in Washington's policy circles. "There's no plan, no exit strategy, and no clarity about what success even looks like. It's paralysis dressed up as toughness."

The critique has found echoes abroad. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz has argued that Iran has "humiliated" the US in full public view — absorbing pressure without capitulating. Whether Merz's remarks have influenced Trump into his bombastic post is unclear. The president has shown little inclination to recalibrate, doubling down instead on economic pressure while framing the conflict as a test of endurance. In his telling, time — and financial strain — are on America's side.

(With agency inputs)

EPIC FURY: Trump's 4am social media post asking Iran to "better get smart soon" and warning, "No More Mr Nice Guy"

US crude exports touch record 6m barrels a day

US crude exports surged to a record above 6 million barrels a day last week as the Iran war sends overseas buyers hunting for replacements to Middle Eastern oil. The figure eclipsed a previous high of nearly 5.3 million barrels a day set in late 2023, according to data from the US energy information administration.

Oil surged to the highest since June 2022, with no end in sight to the US-Iran conflict. **Brent, the global benchmark, rose more than 7% to trade above $119.50 a barrel, a fresh high since the Iran war began.** West Texas Intermediate was trading around $107 a barrel. Prices have now erased all losses since the US and Iran agreed to a temporary ceasefire this month. BLOOMBERG

Ukraine says it hit Russia's oil station, sanctioned tanker

Ukraine said it hit an oil pumping station deep inside Russia, as well as a sanctioned tanker in the Black Sea, marking the latest strikes on its adversary's energy infrastructure. Overnight drones attacked an oil pumping station in Russia's Perm region, more than 1,500km from the Ukrainian border, the country's Security Service SBU said in a Telegram statement. According to the SBU, the attack set most of the facility's reservoirs, operated by Transneft PJSC, on fire.

Ukrainian forces also hit the Russia-linked Marquise tanker, sanctioned by the UK and the EU, General Staff said in a separate statement on Telegram. BLOOMBERG

'You'd be speaking French': British king roasts Trump

King Charles III gave US President Donald Trump a taste of his own medicine at a White House state dinner on Tuesday when he joked that without the British, Americans would be speaking French.

As the heads of state traded jokes during their dinner toasts, Charles referenced previous comments by Trump aimed at European allies he accuses of freeloading on defence since World War II. "You recently commented, Mr President, that if it were not for the United States, European countries would be speaking German. Dare I say that, if it wasn't for us, you'd be speaking French," Charles quipped. He was talking about places with British and French origins in North America, where the rival colonial powers battled for control of the continent before US independence 250 years ago.

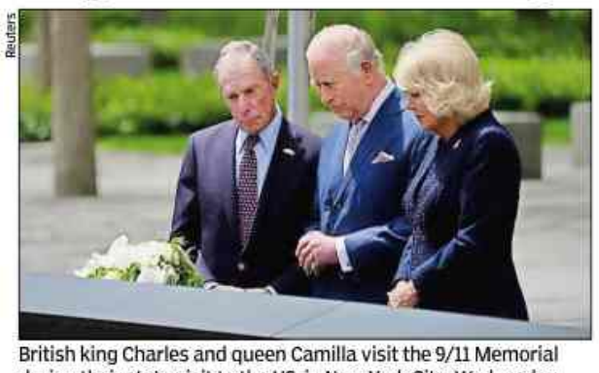
The king's lighthearted remark reflected the warm tone as he and Trump bonded over the "special relationship" between London and Washington, despite tensions over the war in Iran.

He made further jokes at Trump's expense, saying he could not help noticing the "readjustments" to the White House East Wing, which the former real estate tycoon has demolished to build a giant $400 million ballroom. "I am sorry to say that we British, of course, made our own attempt at real estate redevelopment of the White House in 1814," he said, when British soldiers torched the building.

Trump — an avid fan of the British royals whose mother hailed from Scotland — saved most of his humour for domestic targets. "I want to congratulate Charles on having made a fantastic speech today at Congress. He got the Democrats to stand — I've never been able to do that."

The king meanwhile came bearing a gift, part of a British charm offensive aimed at Trump after he lambasted Prime Minister Keir Starmer over his refusal to help against Iran.

Charles presented president Trump with the bell from the British submarine HMS Trump, which was launched in 1944 during World War II. "May it stand as a testimony to our nations' shared history and shining future. And should you ever need to get hold of us, well, just give us a ring," the king said to applause.



Reuters

British king Charles and queen Camilla visit the 9/11 Memorial during their state visit to the US, in New York City, Wednesday

Trump relays details of pvt chat with the British king

At the dinner, Trump said that during a private meeting earlier in the day the British monarch had agreed with him that Iran should never be allowed to have nuclear weapons. "We have militarily defeated that particular opponent, and we're never going to let that opponent ever — Charles agrees with me, even more than I do — we're never going to let that opponent have a nuclear weapon."

Star guests attend dinner

The menu for the lavish dinner included a garden vegetable veloute, spring herbed ravioli and Dover sole meuniere, followed by a White House honey and vanilla bean cremeux. Invited guests included Apple boss Tim Cook, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Nvidia's Jensen Huang, and two-time Masters-winning golfer Rory McIlroy, who was born in Northern Ireland. AP, AFP

Red, White, and who? Trump takes centre page in new US passport

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: The US state department is preparing to roll out a limited-edition "Trump passport" to mark America's 250th birthday — a glossy, gold-accented document that is equal parts travel permit, commemorative souvenir, and a divisive red flag, an ode to both American independence and, critics say, presidential narcissism.

The redesigned passport, slated for a summer debut pending final approval, keeps the familiar navy exterior but tweaks it just enough to announce the occasion. "United States of America" will loom larger and higher on the cover, perched above the crest like a headline that insists on being read first. Flip it over, and the back features a stylised American flag with "250" nestled between the original 13 stars.

But it is the inside that has Washington tongues wagging.

Where the current passport offers a quietly poetic tableau — Francis Scott Key at the bombardment of Fort McHenry, with the closing lines of "The Star-Spangled Banner," an anthem written on an India (Wadia) built ship — the commemorative version opts for something more… contemporary. A portrait of Donald Trump superimposed over the Declaration of Independence, underscored by his signature — in gold.

Supporters see all this as fitting, even overdue. To them, Trump is not merely a political figure but a defining character of the age — disruptive and therefore historically significant. Placing him at the centre of a 250th anniversary celebration, they argue, reflects the living, evolving nature of the republic. Why freeze history at powdered wigs when it can include red ties?

Critics, however, detect something less civic-minded and more narcissistic. They note that no modern US passport has ever featured a sitting president, and that even globally, passports tend to avoid doubling as personality tributes. "Wacky" is how Edward Kolla, a Georgetown University professor and expert on the history of passports, put it, before escalating in other forums to "insane" — a scholarly progression that suggests the design has tested even academic vocabulary.

The administration shrugs off such concerns, noting that the commemorative passports will be limited in number. Only 25,000 copies are planned. Those who prefer a less presidentially immersive experience can still opt for the standard version.

Putin, Trump talk Ukraine, Iran over call

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by phone with US counterpart Donald Trump, Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said Wednesday, adding the two leaders discussed the Middle East war and Ukraine. The call lasted over 90 minutes.

The presidents "paid particular attention to the situation regarding Iran", Ushakov said. "Vladimir Putin considers Donald Trump's decision to extend the ceasefire with Iran to be the right one, as this should give negotiations a chance and, overall, help to stabilise the situation."

He said Russia was "firmly committed to providing every possible assistance to diplomatic efforts" on the Middle East war. The call was held at Moscow's initiative. AFP

Pentagon official to Congress: Iran war has cost $25bn so far

The US has spent an estimated $25 billion on the Iran war, the Pentagon's budget chief told lawmakers on Wednesday, in the administration's most complete public estimate of the conflict's cost so far. Acting Pentagon Comptroller Jules Hurst offered the figure during testimony alongside defence secretary Pete Hegseth before the House Armed Services Committee on Wednesday.

The hearing — meant to discuss the administration's record $1.5 trillion defense budget request — offered lawmakers the first public opportunity to question the department's senior officials regarding the US war against Iran, which began on Feb 28.

Hegseth argued that the more-than 40% increase in the defence budget would reverse years of underinvestment but struck a defiant tone with the lawmakers whose support he'll need to approve the request. "The biggest challenge, the biggest adversary we face at this point are the reckless, feckless and defeatist words of congressional Democrats and some Republicans," he said of the Iran war.

After California Democrat John Garamendi called President Donald Trump's "war of choice" against Iran a "geostrategic calamity" and a "strategic blunder," Hegseth said the lawmaker's "hatred for President Trump blinds you to the truth of the success of this mission." "Who are you pulling for?" Hegseth continued.

It's unclear what Hurst's $25 billion figure includes and leaves out, given the huge cost of replacing US stockpiles of missiles and bombs, the ongoing naval blockade and deployment of an armada to the Middle East alongside thousands of US troops.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, Democrat of Connecticut, previously said "$2 billion a day" was likely a "low-ball figure." The Pentagon estimated the first two days of the war cost $5.6 billion in munitions alone, The Washington Post has reported. BLOOMBERG

Little-known group claims UK stabbing of two Jewish men

A little-known group believed to be linked to Iran claimed one of its "lone wolves" stabbed two Jewish men in north London on Wednesday, the SITE Intelligence Group reported. "Zionists were targeted by our lone wolves in the Golders Green area of London," Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamiya (HAYI) said in a claim posted online. The group has claimed responsibility for a spate of attacks on Jewish-linked targets across Europe in the past two months.

The attack near a synagogue was declared by police as a "terrorist" incident. A 45-year-old man has been arrested so far. The Metropolitan Police's counter-terror unit said the victims, aged 76 and 34, sustained injuries. AFP & PTI

Swiss majority wants popn capped at 10m

A proposal to cap Switzerland's population at 10 million drew support of 52% of respondents in the first such poll showing a majority for the idea.

If voters back the plan in a plebiscite on June 14, the govt would be forced to take measures to reduce immigration, so the number of residents doesn't surpass the mark before 2050. As of last year, 9.1 million people lived in Switzerland.

Heavily dependent on workers from beyond its borders and with average wages that exceed those of peers, the population has been growing for decades. More than a quarter of residents don't have citizenship — one of the highest such proportions in Europe. BLOOMBERG

It is not okay to steal a charity, Musk testifies in OpenAI suit

Elon Musk testified Tuesday he's suing OpenAI and two of its co-founders — Sam Altman and Greg Brockman — because the startup's pivot from a charity to a for-profit business is wrong and sets a concerning precedent for other philanthropic efforts. "It is not okay to steal a charity, that's my view," Musk told jurors at the outset of a trial in federal court in Oakland, California.

The closely watched trial is the culmination of years of animosity and public feuding over the startup the three men worked together to found in 2015, before their ties soured.

Musk said the consequences of the legal fight go far beyond the people involved, and that if Altman and Brockman's conduct isn't deemed improper, "this case will become case law and become precedent to looting every charity in America."

Musk, wearing a black suit and tie as he has in other courtroom appearances, looked comfortable and enthusiastic on the witness stand, at times making short quips.

Musk told jurors there was a risk that AI could be a "double-edged sword," a tool that made significant contributions and advancements to society, but that something that could also go wrong. "It could make everyone prosperous, but it could also kill us all," Musk said. BLOOMBERG

Spanish PM led plot to rig contracts, graft trial hears

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez headed a criminal organisation that rigged public contracts and illegally funded his Socialist party, a defendant in a trial that has threatened the govt told a court on Wednesday.

The trial of Sanchez's former right-hand man, Jose Luis Abalos, is just one of several investigations into alleged corruption by the Socialist premier's family and ex-political allies that have rocked his fragile minority coalition.

Abalos, a former transport minister and Socialist heavyweight who helped propel Sanchez to power in 2018, is accused of earning kickbacks for the irregular awarding of contracts for face masks at the height of the pandemic.

Sanchez has always denied illegal financing of the Socialist party. After removing Abalos from the powerful post of Socialist organisation secretary, Sanchez picked a successor, Santos Cerdan, who is also under investigation for alleged corruption in public contracts. AFP

DAILY PLANET

AFP

DRAGON DIPLOMACY: A staff member checks a Komodo dragon at Surabaya Zoo in Indonesia on Wednesday. Indonesia will lend a breeding pair of endangered Komodo dragons to Japan under an agreement signed Wednesday between Surabaya Zoo and Japan's iZoo. The five-year renewable deal, criticised by animal rights group PETA, will in turn see Surabaya receive a pair of red pandas, a pair of giraffes, four Aldabra giant tortoises and two female Japanese macaques from iZoo, officials said. Indonesia's environment ministry said the programme's main objective was "long-term conservation"

He-Man creator Roger Sweet dies

Creator of the popular He-Man action figure, Roger Sweet, has passed away. He was 91. Roger Sweet died on Tuesday after a battle with dementia, Variety reported, citing information from TMZ. Sweet was the lead designer for Mattel's Preliminary Design Department in the '70s and '80s. In 1976, Mattel turned down a deal to produce toys for "Star Wars". After that, Mattel struggled to launch a popular action figure based on original IP. Enter Sweet, who, in pursuit of a fresh idea, experimented by glueing a Big Jim action figure into a fighting stance and adding clay to its body for bulk. This became the prototype for He-Man, which officially hit the market in 1982.

Japan police probe man over wife in zoo incinerator

Police were questioning a man in Japan on suspicions he disposed of his wife's body using an incinerator at a zoo he works for, local media have reported. The employee, in his 30s, at Asahiyama Zoo on the northern island of Hokkaido reportedly told investigators that he had used the zoo's incinerator — meant to dispose of waste and animal remains — to burn her body "for a few hours", local media reported.

Teen in straw licking case allowed to leave S'pore

A French teen facing criminal charges in Singapore for a straw licking stunt was granted permission on Wednesday to leave the country for three weeks on pledges to return. The 18-year-old is accused of posting to social media a video of himself putting the straw he licked back into the dispenser on an orange juice vending machine. Didier Gaspard Owen Maximilien's clip went viral and triggered a backlash that led to his arrest in Singapore, which has a reputation for not tolerating bad behaviour.

US opioid crisis victims testify at emotional Purdue Pharma hearing

Judge Orders Co To Pay Billions Ahead Of Bankruptcy

Dozens of victims of the US opioid crisis expressed their grief and anger as they testified on Tuesday against Purdue Pharma, the maker of the pain pill OxyContin which was ordered to pay billions by a judge ahead of its dissolution.

Between 1999 and 2023, around 806,000 people died from opioid overdoses in the United States, according to govt data. Purdue and other opioid makers and distributors are accused of aggressively marketing prescription painkillers like OxyContin starting in the 1990s, while hiding how addictive the drugs are.

AFP

A makeshift memorial of opioid overdose victims at the US district court in Newark on Tuesday

Among the victims of the opioid epidemic was the mother of a teenage boy. "Because my mom died, I had depression and thoughts of killing myself," the son told the court via video call. "I hope you feel guilty," he told the Sackler family, which owned Purdue for decades. The family and company are due to pay more than $8bn in fines, forfeitures and penalties.

The hearing to conclude a department of justice probe was originally scheduled to take place remotely, but US Judge Madeline Cox Arleo moved it to an in-person hearing after seeing protesters outside her courthouse in Newark, New Jersey.

"That's the least I could do," the judge told a victim who thanked her.

On Tuesday, some 40 victims and their families attended the hearing, with more joining online. Their testimonies, which Arleo described as "heartbreaking," ran for more than six hours.

Alexis Pleus's son was prescribed OxyContin after suffering a high school football injury. He died in 2014 from a heroin overdose, leaving a "gaping hole in our family for eternity," said Pleus.

Those who survived addiction spoke of their "guilt" of being alive, while families of those who died blamed themselves for not having done enough. Many painted a picture of "destroyed" lives: divorces, losing custody of their children, prison, psychiatric hospitals, and astronomical medical bills in the hope of regaining "a normal, meaningful life."

The wives of two men who died recalled losing their homes. One of them said she suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.

In many cases, families that were torn apart said the nightmare "started in the doctor's offices."

Purdue has admitted to promoting OxyContin by paying doctors to prescribe it, bringing in tens of billions of dollars for the laboratory and the Sackler family. AFP

Beijing bans sale of drones from May 1

Bangkok: Beijing is banning all drones within city limits starting May 1.

The Chinese capital's city govt passed a series of ordinances in late March banning drone sales and flights, although users have long been blocked from flying drones within the city.

A search on Taobao, one of China's top online shopping platforms, showed that users with a Beijing delivery address could not check out with a drone in their cart. The new regulations say that exceptions will be made for universities, research institutions, or public safety use.

Previously, China has restricted drivers of Teslas from parking their vehicles in certain government compounds, including at an airport, owing to espionage concerns over cameras installed in the car. AP

Sri Lanka set to restart excavation of mass grave

Colombo: A Sri Lankan court has ordered the recommencement of excavation work on a mass grave in Chemmani, on the outskirts of Jaffna, seven months after it was halted. The excavation work came to a halt in Sept last due to the pending allocation of funds by the ministry of justice. When work was stopped after 45 days, 240 skeletal remains had been excavated. Apart from the skeletons, 14 piles of bones and items such as feeding bottles for infants, a doll, toys and children's bags and shoes were dug out. PTI